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ABSTRACT

The New York City Volunteer Corps (CVC), which began operation in 1984, is the nation's largest urban youth service corps. Though it has the same dual goals as many youth corps--community service and youth development--the CVC is distinctive among youth corps in many respects. The CVC had pioneered the large-scale use of corpsmembers in delivering human services to homeless, elderly, disabled, and other dependent populations. The corps also enables corpsmembers to pursue mainstream academic credentials during their service and offers them either $2,500 in cash or a $5,000 scholarship after a year of service. Other unique aspects of the CVC include its emphasis on service to the city rather than on employment and training, its definition of corpsmembers as volunteers who receive stipends, its nonresidential program design, and the city's commitment to provide virtually all the corps' financial support. The CVC appears to be well positioned at the end of its start-up phase to build on its initial progress. Thus far, CVC has provided nearly 500,000 hours of needed service to New York City. Although the program was too new to conduct a definitive assessment of its impact on youth development, participation in the program appeared to be particularly effective in developing a sense of service in corpsmembers. At the end of the first year, the CVC had 674 active enrollees, of whom about 75 percent were black, 21 percent were Hispanic, and 2 percent were white. (MN)

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Youth Corps Case Studies:

The New York City Volunteer Corps

Interim Report

by Alvia Y. Branch
Marc Freedman

October 1986

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York City Volunteer Corps (CVC), in operation since the middle of 1984, is the nation's largest urban youth service corps. As such, its experience is of particular interest both to youth corps planners and operators, and to policymakers confronting the challenges of unemployed youth and the unmet needs of our cities.

Though it shares with many youth corps the pursuit of dual goals -- community service and youth development -- CVC is in many respects distinctive among corps:

- After a nine-month planning period, it mounted a citywide program that recruited, trained and placed in the field 1,071 young New Yorkers and had, at the end of its first year, 674 active enrollees.
- It has pioneered the large-scale use of corpsmembers in delivering human services to the homeless, the elderly, the disabled and other dependent populations whose needs might otherwise go unserved.
- It enables corpsmembers to pursue mainstream academic credentials during their service and offers them either $2,500 in cash or a $5,000 scholarship after a year of service.

Other aspects of CVC's program that are of particular interest include an emphasis on service to the city rather than on employment and training, the definition of corpsmembers as volunteers who receive stipends and educational assistance rather than wages, non-residential program design, decentralized management of operations, residential training, a major role played by work sponsors in supervising corpsmembers' work performance, and the commitment of the city of New York to provide virtually all the corps' financial support.

THE ASSESSMENT

This study of CVC is part of a broader assessment of youth corps programs being conducted by Public/Private Ventures with Ford Foundation support. The first of two reports on the CVC, it begins with the developmental period that started in January 1984 and continues through the first full year with corpsmembers in the field, ending in October 1985. A final report on CVC will appear in 1987.

Because the case study focuses on CVC's start-up period and early operations, it does not make definitive assessments. Instead, it seeks to highlight issues that, in our judgment, are important to those interested in youth corps programming generally and are relevant to the development of CVC itself.

This assessment is primarily a qualitative effort and relies in large measure on interviews and observations conducted by members of P/PV's research and program staff. The research team interviewed members of the CVC senior staff and field staff; visited more than 20 work projects to observe corpsmembers on the job and to interview staff, corpsmembers and work sponsors; attended training sessions; and joined CVC teams in their work. The research also included analysis of CVC management information system (MIS) data on participant characteristics, attitudes and program behavior.

THE PROGRAM

The City Volunteer Corps was initially conceived, at the direction of New York City Mayor Edward I. Koch, as a model for national service. It therefore started out in a very ambitious manner -- ambitious in size, in the complexity of its model and the innovativeness of its features.

The goals CVC established for its three-year demonstration period are:

- To provide important and needed services that directly benefit the city and its people, services that would not otherwise be provided;
- To promote the personal development of corpsmembers;
- To achieve a measure of integration among the young people in the corps, who come from different neighborhoods, income levels and walks of life; and
- to stimulate, encourage and inform volunteer service activities in other cities and states.

The corps is operated by an independent, non-profit agency, the National Service Corporation, which administers the $27 million in city funds -- $7 million for the first fiscal year, and $10 million for each of the remaining two -- expected for CVC's three-year demonstration phase. CVC enters into annual contracts with the city; funding for each fiscal year (July-June) is contingent on approval by the Board of Estimate.

During its first year, CVC recruited 1,261 seventeen- to 20-year-old New York residents; 1,071 completed the training and joined teams at work throughout the city. As of October 31, 1985, 674 were actively enrolled.

CVs who enter the field are assigned to teams, each consisting of 10 to 12 youth -- called City Volunteers (CVs) -- and a team leader who is a member of the CVC staff. Teams are CVC's principal production unit and an important vehicle for youth development. Each team leader is responsible for overall management of his/her crew at a work project; work sponsors are expected to provide technical training, task supervision, and equipment and supplies for the project. The team leaders are also responsible for counseling CVs, enforcing CVC rules of behavior, and seeing that volunteers fulfill the corps' educational requirements.

Teams spend three to four months on most projects and get alternating assignments of physical and human service work. Slightly more than half of CVC's total work hours during the first year were spent on physical projects, consisting overwhelmingly of Department of Parks and Recreation projects, community conservation and horticultural projects, and renovation and rehabilitation work. The remaining portion of CVC's work hours were spent on human service projects -- giving assistance to the elderly, tutoring children and adults, providing aid to the physically and developmentally disabled, and performing survey work. Sixty percent of the CVC's work was sponsored by city departments, the rest by non-profit agencies.

CVC also pulls all its teams together periodically to perform "signature services" such as delivering surplus food to needy, homebound individuals; installing and repairing smoke detectors in the homes of elderly people; and assisting at the New York City Marathon.

Outside the work day, CVs are required to attend classes that will provide them with the mainstream educational credentials they may lack. CVC contracts with a number of educational institutions for these services. In addition, CVC encourages educational development through its scholarship program. CVs who stay in the corps for at least six months are entitled either to a "cash readjustment allowance" of $1,000 or a $2,000 scholarship. At nine months, the amounts rise to $1,750 and $3,500; and at one year, to $2,500 and $5,000.

FINDINGS

CVC set out to achieve a program of ambitious scope and considerable scale, and to do so rapidly in the logistically complex setting of New York City's five boroughs. During its startup and early implementation period, it succeeded in getting this program up and running. In addition, CVC has learned a great deal from testing the many elements of its program, lessons that should be valuable as it moves into its next stage of development.

Mounting such an innovative program from scratch is enormously difficult; as can be expected, much remained to be accomplished beyond the achievements of the first year. While the program is operating and making progress, it is not surprising that it has yet to establish the level of productivity, consistency and control expected of a mature program. CVC appears well-positioned at the end of its start-up phase to build on initial progress and develop the potential it has demonstrated.

Work and Service

CVC provided a considerable amount of needed service to New York City during the period covered, completing nearly 500,000 hours of work. CVs engaged in a wide variety of physical and human service projects and proved themselves capable of handling the demands of this work. In general, the quality of work was sufficiently high to meet the basic purpose of the projects and to maintain sponsor confidence.

CVC has established itself as the first youth corps to undertake an extensive commitment to human service work. With substantial creativity, CVC cultivated and performed dozens of different kinds of human service projects that were clearly valued by sponsors and clients, and were inspiring to the CVs who provided the service.

CVC, however, has yet to reach its enormous service potential. Issues surrounding the provision of sufficient work and equipment, adequate worksite management, the complexities of human service delivery, and the scope of project development will need to be resolved in order for the corps to achieve its full capacity.

Youth Development

Participation in delivering human services appears particularly effective in developing a sense of service. CVs showed an ability to empathize with the plights of others and in a great many cases, moved beyond barriers created by their own needs to establish caring relationships with clients.

The impact of CVC's innovative education program could not be assessed during its first year since too few CVs had completed more than six months in the program. During the study period, 34 CVs received their GED certification, others received instruction appropriate to their needs, and a small number of youth were admitted to college. CVC is moving in its second year to more fully integrate education with other CVC activities and to increase the responsibilities of team leaders for involving CVs in the educational component.

CVC gave its participants a structured work experience that required regular attendance and punctuality, as well as basic standards for task performance. This experience served to introduce CVs to workplace expectations and the work ethic.

The Participants

CVC's goal of fielding a diverse group of 800 youth by the end of the first year was met with regard to geographic diversity -- volunteers came from all the boroughs in roughly the same proportions as the city's population -- and the enrollment of substantial numbers of young women -- 42 percent of participants in the first year were female. However, fewer youth than projected were fielded, and the socioeconomic diversity originally envisioned was not attained. Active enrollment at the end of the first year was 674. About three-fourths of the CVs were black, 21 percent were Hispanic and 2 percent were white. Three-fourths had neither a high school diploma nor a GED, and over a third came from families that received either food stamps or AFDC.

The enrollment of a smaller and more disadvantaged group than intended limited CVC's ability to achieve its social integration goal and had operational implications as well: the smaller size of the corps reduced the amount of work it could accomplish, the number of CVs who needed basic skills instruction before they could enter a GED program required adjustments in the education component, and a social support coordinator had to be hired to attend to the service needs of the CVs themselves.

Because the vast majority of CVs did not have the opportunity to complete a full year in the program by the end of the first program year (October 31, 1985), only limited data on attrition and length of stay are available. For CVC's initial pilot group of 65 volunteers, average length of stay was about six months. The corps' residential training program has been successful in its major goals of screening out youth who are not ready to enter the program and instilling a basic understanding of the demands of being a CV. After a brief experiment with non-residential training, CVC resumed residential training, believing that it provided a better orientation to trainees.

Field Operations

Although program design and management decisions are made centrally, CVC's field operations are highly decentralized. This arrangement permits CVC to draw youth from all boroughs of New York City and to perform work throughout the city. On the other hand, it makes it difficult to maintain uniform control over production. Despite the fact that the entire corps comes together only occasionally, CVC has succeeded in sustaining some feelings of identification with the corps through uniforms, residential training, borough-wide meetings and signature services.

Team feeling at CVC is particularly strong; accordingly, team leaders, who function with wide autonomy and discretion, play a crucial role in executing the program. During the early implementation period, however, team leaders did not receive the training and support necessary to make them most effective in this decentralized setting.

Costs and Funding

The City of New York has budgeted $27 million for the corps over a three-year demonstration period. This level of support made it possible for CVC staff to launch a large, complex and innovative effort without having to devote extensive time to fundraising.

During the first fiscal year, FY 1985, only $5.6 million of the $7 million budgeted was spent. This is primarily attributable to the fact that fewer volunteers than planned were enrolled. Since basic administrative and management costs were necessary during the start-up phases irrespective of the size of the corps, the cost-per-slot was substantially higher than could be expected under stable conditions. The cost-per-slot during FY 1985 will fall between $16,767 to $19,550, depending on the number of scholarships and readjustment allowances, attributable to this fiscal year, that are paid to departing CVs.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. The New York City Volunteer Corps, along with the San Francisco Conservation Corps, has demonstrated that an urban, non-residential youth corps program is feasible and has great potential for meeting service needs of a city as well as developmental needs of its youth.

2. In diverging from the model represented by most youth service and conservation corps, CVC has also demonstrated the viability of a large, complex urban youth corps program; the possibility of getting such a program underway rapidly even if it includes numerous innovations; and the practicality and potential of inexperienced youth as providers of human services.

3. The CVC experience with human services demonstrated that:

- There are a variety of human service projects well within the maturity and capacity of relatively inexperienced 17- to 20-year-olds;
- Delivery of human services by corpsmembers is not only feasible but can be highly productive for sponsors and clients;
- Intergenerational projects that involve corpsmembers with older adults or with elementary school pupils, and projects with the moderately disabled, appear to be the best vehicles for this service; and
- Delivering human services appears particularly effective for developing the service ethic among the corpsmembers themselves.

4. The CVC experience is instructive in dealing with the complexities inherent in operating a human service work component:

   - Since most human service assignments require less than a full crew, specific measures must be designed to ensure that an individual corpsmember or small groups of corpsmembers working on these assignments identify with their crew and the corps as a whole.
   - Special steps are also necessary to avoid idleness occasioned by the episodic demands of clients in a human service operation, and to use this downtime effectively to pursue other objectives.

5. The challenge of maintaining corps identity and cohesion in a large, decentralized non-residential program is also highlighted by the CVC experience. Steps taken by the program include a residential training period, development of strong bonds within the team, corps uniforms, borough-wide meetings, and service projects that bring the whole corps together.

6. Special efforts to target recruitment are necessary to attract a diverse group of participants to an urban, non-residential program. In spite of the intention of CVC's planners to avoid targeting disadvantaged, hard-to-employ youth, it is precisely this group that was attracted to the program in its first year. Among CVC's recruitment efforts, only presentations at high schools seemed to have the effect of shifting the profile of youth interested in becoming CVs.

7. The use of work sponsors as technical work supervisors permits the corps to take on a wide variety of projects but reduces the corps' control over production.

8. No matter how well-qualified team leaders may be, in a large, decentralized program that gives team leaders a great deal of latitude, intensive training by the central office in the specific goals of the corps, details of the program and expectations of management -- as well as continuing support by the central office -- is necessary to ensure consistent supervision of crews in the field.

The CVC's experience over the balance of the demonstration, as it builds on progress made in its initial phase and addresses issues that have arisen during this period, should be rich with valuable information for all interested in the operation of youth service programs.

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The City Volunteer Corps (CVC), funded primarily by the City of New York, is the largest urban, non-residential youth corps program operating in the United States today. It had its beginnings in January 1984 when Mayor Edward I. Koch announced plans for a model for national service, of which he is a strong proponent.

Though it shares with many youth corps the pursuit of dual goals -- community service and youth development -- CVC is in many respects unique:

- It has pioneered an innovative approach to youth corps programming -- using corpsmembers to deliver services to the homeless, the elderly, the disabled, and other dependent populations whose needs might otherwise go unmet.
- In its approach to education, participating youth are required to pursue mainstream academic credentials during their program stay, and are entitled to a $5,000 scholarship at the end of a year of service.
- It is by far the largest of existing urban corps, with a goal of 1,000 participants. This scale of operations has important implications, particularly with regard to the use of a decentralized program structure in the youth corps context.

CVC is of particular interest to P/PV in its assessment of 10 youth corps programs. CVC has provided P/PV with an unique opportunity to observe a corps in the throes of startup, that most complex of periods in which a program is designed, implemented and adjusted to meet the exigencies of operation.

Because this case study focuses on CVC's start-up period, it does not make definitive assessments; instead, it seeks to highlight issues that, in our judgment, are important and should be made more widely known to those interested in youth corps programming. In addition, it identifies areas of concern that we feel deserve attention. It is important to note that these issues are identified in a startup context in which the exigencies of creating a new organization exacerbate the difficulties of meeting program objectives. CVC's ability to meet these objectives will be examined more fully in P/PV's final report.

This report focuses on CVC's early start-up period -- beginning with its planning period in January 1984 and continuing to October 1985, a year after CVC's pilot group first entered service. In a number of instances, however, information about developments that do not conform exactly to this framework are considered. Thus, while quantitative analyses of the characteristics, attitudes and behavior of participating youth refer to those who entered training between October 1984 and October 1985, the cost data that are analyzed refer, primarily, to CVC's first fiscal year -- July 1, 1984 though June 30, 1985. In addition, developments taking place immediately after this end date are discussed if they are particularly helpful in understanding the events that are the primary focus of this report.

HISTORY

Mayor Koch has for several years spoken in support of a year of mandatory national service for all Americans when they reach the age of 18. His proposal, as outlined in a March 1983 speech for the Boy Scouts of America, envisioned a nationwide program in which 18-year-old men and women would have the option to choose between civilian and military service.

The civilian option, he said, would involve young Americans in environmental protection activities; assisting teachers or providing staff support for tutoring or truancy follow-up; helping to deliver meals-on-wheels; escorting the elderly and handicapped on shopping trips and to doctors' offices; providing home care for persons -- particularly the elderly -- who would otherwise have to be institutionalized; and working with children in day care programs, foster care and adoption agencies.

All of these activities, he said, would help to meet the nation's pressing needs, especially for social services: "The kinds of jobs that national service participants would fill are almost unlimited. Moreover, this is work that needs doing and no one is doing it. And it's not likely that the private sector will find the money to have it done."

In the course of service, young people who had not completed high school would, he said, be given the chance to learn to read and write and do basic math. Some would go on to college, or aspire to jobs they never thought of pursuing. And, they would get an opportunity to do meaningful work.

But while posing national service as a response to joblessness, Mayor Koch also spoke of it as a way of giving "every teenager the opportunity to serve the nation, and it would be just that . . . a service program, not a make-work or job training program." The problem of alienation was, he said, as serious as the problem of joblessness.

Mayor Koch concluded this address with the contention that a national service program, if efficiently administered, would prove cost-effective when the value of the work performed and cost savings due to decreased unemployment, welfare dependency and the receipt of other transfer payments were taken into account. Nevertheless, he did not express optimism about the prospects for national service at that time. In making this assessment, he cited a tendency of the Reagan administration to seek private solutions to public problems.

Later, in the spring of 1983, after the defeat in Congress of a bill that would have created an American Conservation Corps, Mr. Koch began developing plans to create in New York City a model for the national service program he had proposed. Funds for a study of the feasibility of a New York City youth corps were made available through a foundation, the Fund for the City of New York.

After the completion of this study, Mr. Koch proposed (in his January 1984 State of the City message) forming the National Service Corporation for the City of New York (NSC) -- a private non-profit agency that, working under contract with the city, would be responsible for the design and management of New York City's youth corps program. He outlined a program that would cost an estimated $7 million dollars in the first year of operation and $27 million over the three years of its demonstration period, and would be subject to a budget adoption process that involves approval by the City Council and New York City's Board of Estimate, the body charged with approving all city contracts.

The message proposed a City Volunteer Corps of one thousand 18-year-olds who would work with city agencies and with private groups that provide services to New Yorkers. Eligibility requirements would be minimal; in Mr. Koch's words, they would be "similar to those that existed when the country had a military draft." He suggested the limitation of qualifications to age, mental and physical fitness, and the absence of a criminal record.

Following this message, Mr. Koch appointed Carl Weisbrod, an attorney with extensive experience in city government and manpower demonstrations that benefit low-income populations, as director of the National Service Corporation. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Weisbrod was employed in the mayor's office as chairman of the New York City Loft Board and director of the Mayor's Office of Midtown Enforcement.

Mr. Weisbrod and a small working group began an intensive planning period. The group included Mary Bleiberg, who was to become NSC's director of planning and development; and Gregory Farrell, executive director of the Fund for the City of New York and later a member of the board of directors of NSC. Throughout the following winter and spring, this group visited existing youth corps programs -- the California Conservation Corps, the oldest and largest youth conservation corps in existence in the United States; Katimavik, Canada's national service program; and Community Service Volunteers (CSV), Britain's national service program. The group examined these programs' different approaches to youth corps programming and identified elements that could be adjusted to their mandate from the mayor to develop a model for national service. It was their work that determined the shape of the City Volunteer Corps (CVC), as New York City's youth corps program came to be known.

THE MODEL

Following the advice of other operators of youth corps programs, the working group put aside time to "get the goals straight first." Consistent with Koch's belief that, in a national service program, the goal of providing young people with an opportunity to serve the nation is more important than finding a solution to the problem of joblessness among America's youth, the CVC planning group determined that CVC would be first and foremost a program to serve the city. The young people who participated in the program -- the City Volunteers (CVs) -- were expected to focus first on goals beyond themselves. In developing early projects, potential sponsors were therefore told to focus more on the project's requirements than on the needs of the CVs. As with most youth corps programs, skills development or the redress of issues of equity were not the primary goals.

A second major decision was to recruit a diverse group of enrollees reflecting the geographic, racial and socioeconomic variety of New York City's youth population; the disadvantaged or the most difficult to employ would not be targeted.

A third decision was to have the CVs work to fill outstanding gaps in public services, spending about half their time on human service work and half their time on physical work. It seemed highly unlikely that such labor intensive human services as caring for the young, the elderly, the homeless and other dependent populations would ever be fully provided through paid employment. And, among the possibilities for physical work projects, devoting about one-quarter of CVC service hours to the New York City parks system was planned to help repair and restore facilities that had suffered over the years as the work force was decimated by financial pressures on the city budget. The CVC planners expected the biggest payoff in terms of the personal development of youth to come as they provided services to individual citizens, while the volunteers' physical work would provide service from which all New Yorkers would benefit.

In deciding how services would be provided, the planners identified a fourth major element, the "empowerment" of teams. Empowerment referred to the process whereby teams would, over time, become increasingly better able to motivate and regulate their own behavior. Thus, they would not be completely dependent upon their supervisors for direction and guidance. Instead, they would be taught to work responsibly and productively even when their supervisor or team leader was absent. CVC planners believed that this approach would ultimately provide a better introduction to the work ethic than approaches requiring more constant supervision.

A fifth area of choice -- between a residential and non-residential program design -- was made in favor of the latter. The idea of a residential program was considered and abandoned in light of cost and the complexities of putting together a residential program in a setting where housing is not readily available. But CVC planners sought to simulate some of the benefits of a residential corps by absorbing most of the CVs' discretionary time, creating an all-encompassing experience for the duration of life in the Corps.

A sixth decision related to the definition of corpsmembers as volunteers or wage earners. The planning group decided that corpsmembers were to be volunteers. CVs are provided with an $80 per week stipend to cover the expenses associated with service -- lunches, transportation to and from worksites, the cost of uniforms -- but compensation was to be separated from hours of service. (While some CVs clearly regard the stipend as a wage, that was not the original intention.) A "readjustment allowance" of $2,500 in cash or a college scholarship of $5,000 is offered to each CV who completes a year of service.

THE INITIAL PROGRAM

The model that emerged from these deliberations became the initial City Volunteer program.

An early program statement established four objectives for the Corps:

- To provide important and needed services that directly benefit the city and its people, services that would not otherwise be performed;
- To promote the personal development of the volunteers;

- To achieve a measure of integration among the young people in the Corps, who come from different neighborhoods, income levels and walks of life;

- To stimulate, encourage and inform volunteer service activities in other cities and states.

The program statement also declared that "projects will be structured to give the volunteers ample opportunities to learn, to develop new interests and abilities, to promote their personal development, and to stimulate further volunteer activity in the community. The CVC offers young adults a unique opportunity to develop a service ethic, and to express the idealism which is their special province."

Other elements of the model outlined in the initial program statement included the six discussed above -- the emphasis on service to the city rather than employment and training, broad-based recruitment, the inclusion of human service work projects, the "empowerment" of teams, the non-residential design, and the definition of corpsmembers as volunteers who receive stipends and educational assistance -- and the following:

- Recruitment of 18-year-olds only;

- Fielding a corps of 1,000 volunteers by June 1985;

- A residential orientation and training period before assignment to service;

- Assistance for high school dropouts to earn a GED and/or improve their English literacy and computational skills;

- Teams of 10 to 12 CVs, each representing a cross-section of the city's 18-year-olds, including those with diverse abilities and experience;

- Distribution of projects among the city's many communities as well as between physical and human service work;

- Development of short-term "signature" projects involving large numbers of CVs in highly visible, high-impact activities such as cleaning up parks and beaches, and delivering food to the homebound;

- Rendering assistance during snow emergencies, heat waves or blackouts, flu epidemics, fuel crises and water main breaks;

- A major role for work sponsors in identifying service needs and measurable project objectives, supplying materials and equipment, and providing necessary technical supervision.

THE ASSESSMENT

This study of the City Volunteer Corps is part of a broader assessment of the potential of youth corps programs being conducted by P/PV with Ford Foundation support. As the largest of the urban, non-residential youth corps programs currently in existence, the City Volunteer Corps experience can provide information on a number of issues of importance to the youth corps field.

Since most youth conservation corps programs have operated outside major cities -- capitalizing upon both the problems and the resources of the natural environment -- it is important to determine, first of all, whether this is a concept that can be effectively realized in an urban setting and, if so, what significant modifications to the concept might be required.

Second, it is not clear who will come forward to join an urban youth corps program, and whether their backgrounds will be sufficiently diverse to satisfy both the desire to serve disadvantaged youth and the desire to allow youth from all backgrounds to work together interdependently. The CVC case study will provide some answers to these questions.

Third, many youth conservation corps programs have been residential, with the shared living experience thought to contribute to esprit de corps -- a hallmark of the youth corps concept. The implications of a non-residential youth corps program are not yet fully known.

Fourth, the City Volunteer Corps is the first youth corps program in this country in which corpsmembers deliver face-to-face human services on a large scale. Important questions arise from this important innovation. Will it work? Will human service projects require higher skill levels than are likely to be available among youth attracted to the program? Will the structure of human service work differ so significantly from that of physical work that basic adjustments will have to be made in key elements of the youth corps concept?

The fifth issue involves education. The City Volunteer Corps is one of few youth corps programs to attempt to address the educational needs of their participants by requiring that they pursue mainstream academic credentials -- a high school diploma (or its equivalent), a college education, or other post-secondary educational and vocational experiences. Confronted by substantial numbers of youth with serious educational deficiencies, youth corps programs have had only limited success in their attempts to address them. Most have opted for alternative educational approaches that have not dealt directly with their participants' need for basic academic skills or formal academic credentials. The CVC approach to education, because it represents a significant departure from existing practice among youth corps programs, deserves careful attention.

The final issue relates to the concept of service and what it means for both the participants who provide the service and the City of New York -- the recipient. CVC is deliberately not a jobs program focused on imparting specific job skills or finding post-program placements. Though not indifferent to the employment aspirations of its participants -- CVC assumes that as a result of their program experience these young people will acquire important skills that will enhance their subsequent employability -- the emphasis of this program is on service.

Perhaps because it was conceived of as a model for national service, CVC started out in a very ambitious manner -- ambitious in terms of the size of its program, the complexity of its model, and the number of innovative features that had never before been demonstrated in a youth corps setting. Among the innovations were: the requirements that participants pursue formal academic credentials, the combination of both physical and human services work, an emphasis on the concept of service and voluntarism, the intention to work toward the empowerment of teams so they could operate with a degree of autonomy in the field, and the option of a cash payment or a scholarship at the end of service as an incentive for continued participation. These innovations -- coupled with the goal of reaching full strength within a relatively short period of time -- have been major determinants of CVC's first year experience.

A combination of research techniques was used in the development of this case study. Primarily a qualitative effort, it relies in large measure on interviews and observations conducted by members of P/PV's research and program staff. During the course of this effort, every member of the CVC senior staff was interviewed -- many of them three or more times throughout the course of the research. Moreover, the incumbents of virtually every position in the CVC hierarchy -- including both central and field staff -- were interviewed.

P/PV staff visited more than 20 work projects -- among them a combination of physical and human service projects. A number of these sites were visited on more than one occasion, or by more than one P/PV staff person -- thus providing an opportunity to see worksites under different conditions and to judge them from a number of different perspectives. At each visit to a work project, staff conducted interviews with participants, team leaders and work sponsors as appropriate. In addition, an assessment of the work project itself -- taking into account such factors as the number of youth deployed, the extent to which they were kept busy, the difficulty of the task and the nature of the supervision being provided -- was made.

Twice, a member of P/PV's research staff became a "CV for a Day," spending a full day working as part of a team -- doing early morning physical training, performing work alongside CVs, sharing conversation and lunch, sitting in on team and borough meetings. P/PV staff also attended training, observing the process by which applicants are transformed into CVs.

These largely qualitative techniques were supplemented by an analysis of management information system (MIS) data covering participant characteristics, attitudes and program behavior.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

CVC is organized as a private, non-profit corporation in New York State. As such, it is legally independent of its primary funding source, the City of New York.

Non-profit status provides CVC with a number of options not available to public agencies. It enables the corps to receive contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals and to maintain an active board of directors to help extend the program's scope. Non-profit status also decreased the logistical difficulty of start-up by allowing CVC to bypass civil service regulations and requirements to secure space in government-owned or leased facilities. On the other hand, CVC's independence from city government required program operations to devote time and resources to develop basic administrative capacities, such as fiscal, personnel and purchasing systems, capacities that are automatically provided to city agencies.

While legally independent, CVC is still closely tied to the city administration and very strongly associated with Mayor Koch. Since the overwhelming majority of CVC funding comes from the city, it must participate in the city budget process and go before New York's Board of Estimate for funding approval. Moreover, CVC is obligated, by contract, to provide one-quarter of its services to the Department of Parks and Recreation, and it views the city, overall, as its primary service client.

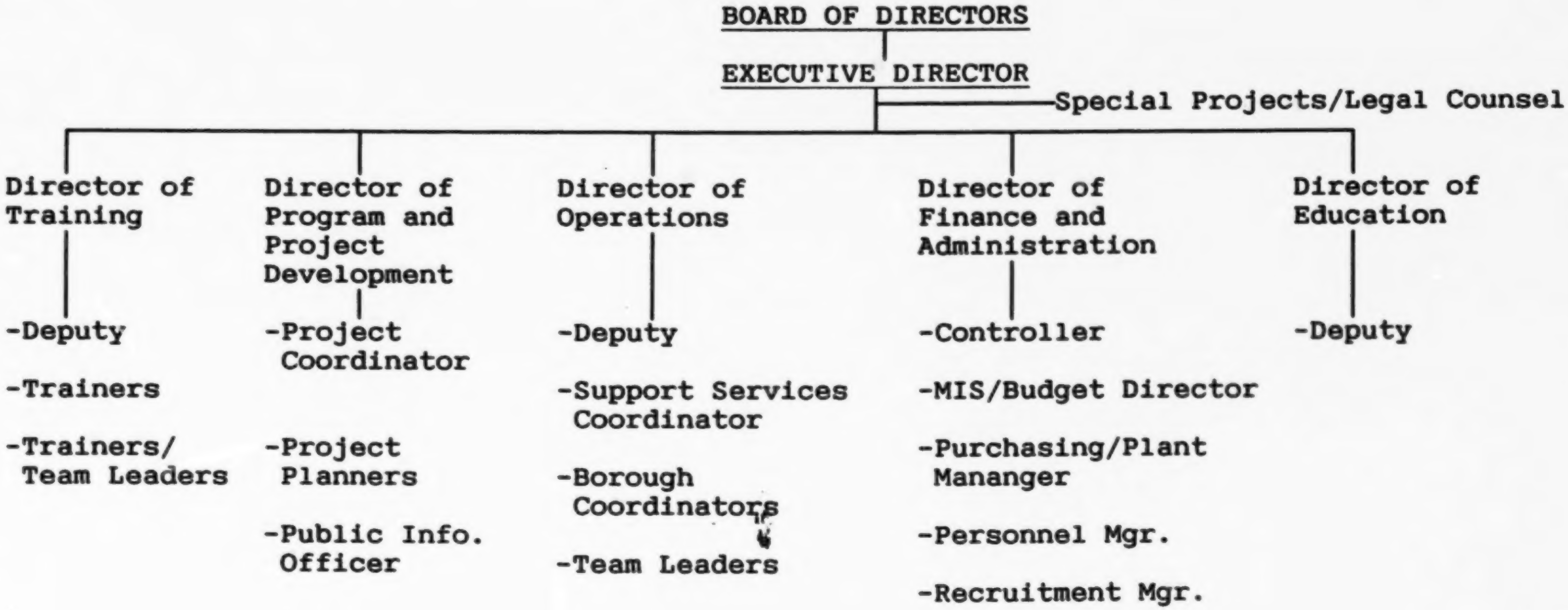
This chapter describes CVC's administrative and decision-making structure, which consists of three tiers -- a Board of Directors, six central office departments, and nearly 50 teams in the field. This structure, depicted in Figure II.1, at June 1985 has remained intact in its essentials since CVC's inception.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CVC has a large Board of Directors, consisting of well-known individuals appointed by the mayor. The board's 26 members include representatives from The Ford Foundation, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Lincoln Center, The New York Times, Banco Popular, the New School for Social Research, the law firm of Breed, Abbott & Morgan, Catholic Charities and the Southern Queens Park Association. There are five committees of the board: Program, Finance, Education, Public Relations and Fundraising. During the first year, the entire Board met six times; the committees met more or less frequently as appropriate.

FIGURE II.1

CVC Organizational Chart



The board members are well-informed on issues, active on CVC's behalf, and appear to have an effective working relationship with CVC management.

CENTRAL OFFICE

The central office has six departments: the Executive Office, Finance and Administration, Program and Project Development, Education, Training and Operations. Staff at central headquarters constitute half of CVC's total staff.

Program design decisions are handled centrally, as are important decisions about project selection, who will perform them, and how CV's will be trained and educated.

The Executive Office consists of the executive director, the chief executive and operating officer of the organization; and a special assistant who handles legal affairs and a variety of special projects.

The Finance and Administration Department includes a number of units: the controller, a budget and MIS group, personnel, purchasing and plant operations, and recruitment.

A director and an assistant form the Education Department, which is responsible for CVC's formal and informal educational components.

The Training Department staff includes a director, a deputy director and two trainers. They are responsible for CV and staff training programs, spending a considerable amount of their time at the residential training camp in upstate New York.

The Program and Project Development Department, which develops CVC's work projects, includes a director, four planners, and a public information officer.

The Operations Department manages CVs and teams in the field, including the corps' 48 team leaders. The central office part of the department includes a director, deputy director, a borough coordinator for each of New York's five boroughs, and a support services coordinator.

The managers of the central office departments share a great deal in background and experience, having all lived and worked in New York City. This knowledge affords CVC entree into a wide variety of public and private agencies relevant to the corps' work.

These managers also bring diverse experiences to the task of managing a youth corps program. Many have advanced academic degrees and all have experience in disciplines such as law, education, public policy and management. A number have prior experience with demonstration projects. These factors strengthen the cross-disciplinary and experimental nature of CVC. On the other hand, CVC management brings less direct experience with youth service corps program. In order to tap the knowledge of experienced youth corps program operators, and enable the corps to get off the ground without staffing up too early, CVC engaged a number of consultants to provide technical assistance during its planning period.

CVC's first executive director, Carl Weisbrod, played a strong leadership role in setting CVC policy, forging the model, directing its implementation and acting as the program's public spokesperson. An attorney and city government administrator by training and background, he is well-regarded for his ability to get new projects up and running.

In managing CVC during the first year, the executive director called on a senior management group consisting of the department heads of Operations, Program and Project Development, Finance and Administration, Training and Education. He took an active and aggressive role in running this group, which considers the most important management decisions facing the organization.

CVC has had a number of other committees as part of its central office management structure, some standing and others called together on an ad-hoc basis to deal with specific issues. One ongoing committee has been the Strategic Planning Group, whose main charge has been to devise means for implementing decisions made by the senior management group. This group is comprised of deputies from the various departments.

FIELD

CVC's field structure is decentralized, with CVs and team leaders traveling directly from their homes to the worksites, and not to central headquarters, each morning.

Since CVC is a non-residential program operating throughout New York City, CVs on different teams come into contact with each other only occasionally. This contact occurs at monthly borough meetings or during signature services that involve the entire corps. Team leaders see each other every Thursday when they travel to central headquarters to pick up paychecks and meet with their borough coordinators.

Borough Coordinators

The five borough coordinators are the primary link between central headquarters and the field. Each borough is assigned a coordinator, who oversees the activities of the teams working in that borough at any given time. Since teams rotate in and out of boroughs, the coordinators, who are in the field only two days a week, do not spend much time with any particular group.

The borough coordinators conduct monthly borough meetings for the teams operating under their jurisdiction. These meetings usually consist of reports on current projects from representatives of each team, a presentation by a member of the senior management team, and announcements of matters of importance to the CVs.

The Team

The team is CVC's most important unit, the vehicle of both production and youth development. All CVs who complete training are placed on a team where they will remain throughout their tenure in the corps. Originally, a CVC team consisted of 10 to 12 youth and a team leader. Over time, teams have grown larger, in some cases including upwards of 15 CVs.

CVC generally rotates teams into and out of projects every three to four months, although these assignments can be shorter or longer, depending upon circumstances. Work projects requiring more time for completion are assigned a series of teams. Each team works on both human service and physical projects in different neighborhoods in an effort to give CVs wide exposure to the city and to different types of work.

In addition to working at both human service and physical assignments, CVC uses rotation as a device for matching teams at different levels of maturity with projects that will make demands appropriate to their abilities, and for re-energizing a team that appears to be languishing on its current project.

Team members generally move through the program together, except when projects require the "splitting" of teams. Splitting teams occurs primarily when a site, often a human service site, is unable to accommodate a full team. Split crews work at related projects or at the same project in different locations.

Turnover among CVs requires backfilling. When CVs graduate, separate from the corps, or simply quit, new CVs are assigned to the affected teams from training camp. As the director of operations explains, "There is a certain bonding that takes place when backfills are assigned to the team. The older CVs 'evaluate' the new CVs and do not tolerate these new CVs that don't mesh into the team quickly." Thus backfilling can produce a stronger team, or it can strain previously established bonds. In an effort to introduce backfills more gradually and to provide them with some initial experience, CVC has developed and will be implementing "divisional" physical work projects for large groups of 20 to 25 CVs directly out of training.

Teams are intended to function as a source of support for CVs. The team is accountable for the completion of projects, and each individual CV is held accountable for his contribution to the performance of the team. Thus, team members need to be able to draw on each other's strengths as they perform their work. CVC attempts to strengthen team identify and discipline by encouraging competition among teams. Teams compete for recognition as the "Team of the Month", an honor that acknowledges excellence in attendance and quality of work.

CVC also seeks to improve the ability of teams to regulate and motivate themselves through the development of "empowerment." Empowerment occurs when teams are able to work independently and efficiently on their own, using their skills, resources present in the group, and a sense of common purpose to guide them in the absence of direct supervision or oversight. In the case of new teams, CVC envisions empowerment developing over several phases of team life. Empowerment is intended to wean CVs away from the expectation of outside supervision and assure that work does not grind to a halt at the times when no supervision is available.

The Team Leader

The key figure in the CVC's most important unit -- the team -- is its staff leader. CVC had 48 team leaders in the field as of June 30, 1985, each of whom was responsible for supervising a team of CVs.

Team leaders are responsible for discipline at the worksite, counseling and advice to CVs, development of team cohesiveness and, ultimately, empowerment. They are an important source of MIS information, and the primary CVC representative handling worksite logistics with the sponsor. They are responsible for reflecting and enforcing CVC's attendance rules, and for handling work problems with CVs on both a group and individual basis -- stressing the importance of developing good habits and requiring that work be done over if it does not meet acceptable standards. They are responsible for empowering the CVs to deliver high quality services on their own or under the supervision of the project sponsor since team leaders have administrative responsibilities, plus duties at training camp and at split-team locations, that often require them to be absent from the worksite.

CVC is structured to provide team leaders a maximum of latitude in personal styles and in influence over youth development. The freedom afforded team leaders is, in part, an outgrowth of the experimental nature of CVC -- an effort to let team leaders try their hand and to see which styles and techniques work well and less well. CVC also feels this is the way to attract the best team leaders -- individuals who are creative, talented, dedicated and who need room to operate. The job is conceived and salaried as a one-year assignment, although it can be renewed for an additional year.

Team leaders at CVC are college graduates. Their ages range from early 20s to late 30s, and they are split evenly between males and females. They are selected primarily for their leadership ability and interest in serving CVC's mission, not for any special technical expertise. Backgrounds of team leaders commonly include prior stints in the Peace Corps, in the armed forces, as athletic coaches or in youth programs.

A training session for team leaders immediately preceded the training camp for the first cycle of CVs. Thereafter, however, new team leaders spent only a day being introduced to the program by the Operations and Education departments before entering the field. The effect was much more one of orientation than of training. The team leaders were then placed with their team. In some cases, but not always, the previous team leader remained with the team for a few days to ease the transition.

In the second year, CVC has made team leader training a high priority and instituted measures designed to improve support and communication between central office and the field. In-service training for team leaders is now held two afternoons a month, and occasionally for a full day. All team leaders are sent to Outward Bound in North Carolina to learn team empowerment skills and to get a chance to better know other team leaders and staff members.

Initial training for team leaders has also been increased. A senior team leader position for orientation and training is now included on the staff. The person filling this position will conduct intensive training with all new team leaders joining CVC.

Work Sponsors

The role of the work sponsor in CVC's model is three-fold: to train CVs; to supply all materials and equipment necessary for performance of the assignment; and to provide direct, day-to-day supervision over project work. The role of the team leader is overall team management, not direct work supervision.

The basic rationale for this arrangement is flexibility. Counting on work sponsors for supervision enables CVC to perform many different kinds of projects requiring different kinds of expertise. CVs and team leaders remain generalists, leaving the special supervisory and equipment needs of particular projects to the experts, the work sponsors. Meanwhile, team leaders are given the freedom to attend to other tasks.

IMPLICATIONS OF DECENTRALIZATION

CVC operations are much more decentralized than those of most other U.S. youth corps. CVC handles decisions about the program at three levels: the board considers and must approve major policy decisions; central staff designs the program and makes operating policy; and field staff makes day-to-day determinations in the performance of the program. The result is a program that is centralized as to management but decentralized as to operations. CVC decisions about program design, project development and team assignment are made by headquarters. Decisions about structure of the work day, task assignments and youth development are made by the team leader and work sponsor with little central staff oversight.

Other corps see advantages in a centralized arrangement. They find that it helps to develop identification with the corps as a whole, communicate clear standards and goals to corpsmembers, and monitor their execution. By having the entire group -- all participants and staff -- convene each morning, for example, objectives and standards are communicated in a consistent manner. And since corps leaders are daily apprised of team performance, any deviation from a corps' standards can be dealt with at once.

CVC elected to install a decentralized field administration primarily because of the logistical constraints of running a non-residential program in New York City. CVC's considerable enrollment and the size of New York City effectively prevent gathering together each day at a central location.

CVC is also intent on preserving geographical diversity in the volunteers it selects, the makeup of each team, the projects it performs, and the experience it provides to CVs. Even if CVC were to set up local headquarters in each borough, it would be extremely time consuming for CVs to convene there each day, traveling by public transportation, and then to disperse to a variety of worksites, again by public transportation. CVs already spend a great deal of time commuting, due to the sheer size of New York City; additional commuting time would seriously impinge on service delivery. One way around this difficulty might be for CVC to acquire vehicles for this purpose, however the cost would be very high. Furthermore, CVC encourages the use of public transportation by corpsmembers, who will need this skill once they get into the world of work.

CVC tries in other ways to maintain the CVs sense of being part of a corps, since it believes that attachment to a larger corps will strengthen commitment to service goals, reduce alienation on the part of CVs, and provide opportunities for them to learn from each other. Esprit de corps is cultivated at CVC through residential training, monthly borough meetings, signature services, uniforms, and common objectives and standards.

These measures have succeeded in developing some identification with CVC as a whole, although conversations with team leaders and corpsmembers suggest that this attachment is not as powerful or immediate as the allegiance they feel to their teams.

CVC's decision to pursue major innovations in youth corps programming and administration through decentralized operations has posed a number of challenges. The structural challenge facing CVC is to capture the advantages of decentralized field operations without allowing the program to stray too far from its model or objectives. During the first year, distance between the field and central office at times contributed to problems in program implementation and fed tensions between field and central staff -- not surprising given the scale and scope of startup, and the geographic spread of CVC across New York City.

One area of tension between the central office and the field concerns CVC's sometimes competing objectives of service to the city and responsiveness to the needs of youth -- an issue that is common to most youth service corps programs. CVC's program design emphasizes service to the city and calls for a mix of CVs who are high school graduates and dropouts who come from all socioeconomic backgrounds. In fact, most CVs come from poor economic circumstances and are high school dropouts, many of whom have serious needs. The neediness of these volunteers has generated pressure to increase CVC services to the youth themselves, but CVC's management, while aware of these needs, has reaffirmed its original commitment to allocate the corps' resources primarily to serve the city.

This conflict was reflected by team leaders in the field. Some became advocates for the youth, concerned that they were not provided with more support services. At times, team leaders' sympathy with the CVs' needs interfered with carrying out CVC's principal objective, production of high quality work. For example, a CV with severe problems at home might be late or frequently absent. By repeatedly excusing the CV because of extenuating circumstances and waiving CVC's attendance policy, the team leader could undercut the strength of that policy for other CVs.

Another issue between the central office and the field concerns the flow of useful management information to headquarters. CVC's management believes that it should be "an organization where policy ought to come from team leaders up, rather than from the top down." CVC has a fully functioning MIS unit to provide data from the field. However, due to a cumbersome reporting process, the flow of direct information on project status from team leaders to management has been slow and limited.

Support for team leaders is a very important area for CVC since the program is so dependent on their spirit, enthusiasm and performance. This support should come primarily from borough coordinators. However the borough coordinators were so heavily burdened with other duties early in the program -- in particular handling disciplinary actions and administrative responsibilities -- that they were only able to spend two days a week in the field. Given that 10 or more teams often work in a borough simultaneously, the result was only occasional field contact with each team leader. While borough coordinators saw their team leaders on each week when they came into headquarters to pick up paychecks, the brevity of these sessions prohibited sustained communication.

In addition to the strengthening of pre-service and in-service training described earlier in the chapter, CVC has made a number of structural changes in an attempt to address issues in the organization of the central staff, the field staff and the relationship between the two. The impact of these changes in administrative structure will be examined in P/PV's final report on CVC, after they have been fully implemented and CVC has accumulated sufficient experience with them.

First, the borough coordinator has become a field coordinator, with ongoing responsibility for approximately 10 CVC teams spread throughout the city. There will be five field coordinators. This arrangement is designed to improve continuity in the relationship between the team leaders and central staff. Field coordinators will spend three days a week in the field.

Second, team leaders have been given greater power to "separate", or terminate CVs from the Corps. Separations occupied a large amount of the borough coordinators' time during the first year.

Third, a number of administrative changes have been instituted, including a new form for bi-weekly team leader reports and an Operations Advisory Committee.

Fourth, a deputy director for program administration has been added to the Operations Department. This deputy will focus on the assignment and rotation of teams, work closely with the Planning Department and free the field deputy to focus more on the field.

And, fifth, coordination among the departments in central headquarters has been addressed. During the start-up year, individual departments concentrated heavily on building basic capacities and creating procedures, and spent less time on coordination with other departments. Now that CVC is past the start-up period, a number of steps have been taken to focus on the organization as a whole. These include the appointment of a deputy executive director charged with internal management. This action was intended to give CVC a full-time internal manager and allow the executive director to spend more time dealing with recruitment relations with the public, other organizations, New York's political structure, and broader policy issues.

III. THE CITY VOLUNTEERS: ENROLLMENT, TRAINING, CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTRITION PATTERNS

This chapter presents the characteristics of the first New Yorkers to become City Volunteers, and describes the process -- from outreach to training -- by which this occurred. In addition, it presents some of the CVs' early program experiences -- their length of stay in the program, their reasons for leaving the program and the readjustment options they elected when they left.

CVC was to be a corps of 800[1] 18-year-olds broadly representative of all New York City youth. It was intended to include males and females from each of the city's boroughs -- Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island -- and to roughly reflect the racial, ethnic and income distribution of New York City's population. Participants would be admitted on a first-come first-served basis, as long as they met the eligibility requirements. Once it reached full strength, CVC planned to institute a lottery whereby the likelihood of being accepted in the program would be a matter of chance.

CVC does not target disadvantaged youth or the most difficult to employ within the youth population. A mix of socioeconomic backgrounds is seen by CVC as essential to the concept of social integration -- young people from different backgrounds working together interdependently. CVC did, however, set the explicit goal of recruiting a corps with 50 percent high school graduates and 50 percent high school dropouts.

FROM OUTREACH THROUGH TRAINING

Outreach and Recruitment

Outreach and recruitment procedures changed substantially over the first year of operation as CVC encountered obstacles to the attainment of its original recruitment goals. Recruitment and outreach had begun on a fast track, with the goal of fielding 800 CVs in the first year of operation. Because of the need to get the program up and running in a short period of time, early recruitment procedures relied extensively on the use of existing networks -- sending letters to youth-serving organizations announcing the existence of CVC, and asking for a date at which a recruiter could make a presentation. Most of these organizations, however, served low-income minority youth no longer in school.

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[1] CVC has thus far not been able to obtain an anticipated exemption from income taxes and Social Security contributions. The need to make these payments forced CVC to reduce the projected slot level of the corps from 1,000 to 800.

It was clear almost from the beginning that CVC would experience serious difficulties meeting its recruitment goals -- both in the aggregate and as regards diversity. The first cycles of youth -- the pilot cycle trained in October and the first full-fledged cycle that went to training camp in January -- were both much smaller than the 120 thought necessary to meet the overall numbers goals. Moreover, they included large numbers of high school dropouts and virtually no whites. Thus, as early as mid to late January, CVC staff were looking for ways of improving recruitment.

A new recruitment strategy began to take shape in the spring of 1985. CVC commissioned a study -- conducted by a marketing firm -- with the goal of determining how best CVC might position itself to attract middle income, high school graduates. The study had a number of components: it interviewed parents and created focus groups of target youth in order to get a fix on what their goals and prospects were, as well as their hypothetical reaction to an organization such as CVC. Among the study's recommendations were that CVC:

- Increase its eligible age range to include youth between the ages of 17 and 20; and
- Depict itself as an alternative to going directly from high school into college -- a year off to find oneself and do something meaningful.

These recommendations were accepted and quickly put into effect. By increasing the age range CVC increased its total eligibility pool from 109,000 for 18-year-olds to 451,000 for youth between 17 and 20. In July CVC recruited its first cycle under the 17 to 20 eligibility rule. There is reason to believe that important differences in the characteristics and behavior of CVs will result from this change. It is possible that older youth are more stable or more motivated, and will thus have qualitatively different experiences in CVC. However, because this shift occurred late in the study period, the number of youth admitted under the new eligibility rule is too small to permit a credible quantitative analysis.

In June, the bright and colorful CVC poster that was to appear on buses and subways all over New York City had been designed. Pitched toward college-bound high school graduates, it showed a CVC sweatshirt thrown across an array of college sweatshirts -- Brown, Fordham and Columbia. The caption read "Wear this for a year, and the others will fit better." These posters were written in English and Spanish.

CVC also began developing a targeted outreach strategy, with the demographic characteristics of the recruitment staff, which includes blacks, whites and Hispanics, playing a key role. Their racial diversity is part of a plan that includes sending white recruitment staff to white neighborhood organizations in order to depict CVC as a viable choice for middle-income whites.

Along with the shift in the content of the recruitment effort came a shift in its management. Applications are coded to reflect the recruiter and the source; this constitutes a recruitment tracking system to enable CVC to evaluate the effectiveness of the various techniques that are implemented.

Another tactic designed to increase the number of CVs who are high school graduates has been the shift to recruitment in high schools. In spite of requirement that non-graduates had to have been out of school for at least two months, officials from the Board of Education initially feared that CVC would encourage youth to drop out of high school or discourage them from going on to college. CVC was able to gain ground, however, by citing statistics to document the existence of a large pool of in-school youth who were not college-bound, but who could benefit from a year in CVC. CVC was subsequently permitted to make recruitment presentations in high schools beginning in March 1985. Recruitment staff have since visited every high school in the city, generally with a team leader and a CV in uniform.

Table III.1 tabulates reports of how the 1,261 CVC trainees who entered training between October 1984 and October 1985 first heard about the program. These young people came to CVC via a number of routes; however, the referral sources responsible for bringing the largest numbers of recruits were CVC's poster (28.6%), community groups (26.4%), high schools (12.6%) and friends (10.7%). Because CVC is a new organization, word-of-mouth via friends or relatives was not as strong a referral source as it is for more established youth corps programs. Thus, CVC's new recruitment techniques -- the poster and presentations at high schools -- appear to have brought in a substantial percentage of their recruits.

Application

Once a recruiter gains the ear of someone interested in becoming a City Volunteer, it is up to the applicant to move the process forward through a number of steps. He or she completes a brief application form that asks for fairly standard demographic information, social attitudes related to willingness to work with people from different backgrounds, and a history of voluntary service. Youth are also given a brief orientation to CVC -- they are told what to expect of the experience, what the rules and regulations are and what the rewards of the experience will be.

Table III.1

CVC Referral Sources by Selected Characteristics of Trainees

	Sources of Referrals						
Characteristics	Community Groups	Media	Poster and Subway Ads	High School	Other School	Friends	Other
Sex							
Female	23.9%	5.3	26.3	15.7	7.5	11.6	9.7
Male	28.3%	5.7	30.3	10.4	8.6	10.0	6.8
Race							
Black	25.7%	4.7	29.1	13.7	7.5	12.5	6.7
Hispanic	29.0%	9.3	28.0	9.8	10.4	5.2	8.3
Other	21.7%	4.3	26.1	4.3	4.3	0.0	39.1
White	35.3%	0.0	17.6	5.9	11.8	11.8	17.6
High School Graduate							
No	27.0%	5.2	30.0	11.0	8.4	11.5	6.9
Yes	24.1%	6.7	23.1	19.0	7.2	7.7	12.3
All Trainees	26.4%	5.5	28.6	12.6	8.1	10.7	8.1

The next steps include being fingerprinted in order to facilitate the records check that will establish whether he/she has been convicted of felony, and having a health examination to determine if the applicant is fit for the rigors of training and service, and a test to determine drug use. The health exams are conducted by the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation and the medical department of the Department of Sanitation. Youth who have been convicted of serious crimes -- crimes against people or grand larceny -- are excluded. Youth determined to be drug users are also excluded.

All told, there are four steps -- including picking up the application, taking the medical exam, being fingerprinted and going through orientation -- before an applicant is accepted. Having successfully passed through these stages, the next step in the process for an interested youth is attending a residential training camp.

Training

One of the most important aspects of the CVC experience is the training camp. It is the process by which the corps attempts to transform a relatively unselected group of youth into a disciplined group of City Volunteers, ready to serve the City of New York. Inappropriate youth are screened out, and those who remain are introduced to the concept of service and begin to develop *esprit de corps*.

Training camp begins with a long bus ride -- to Camp Wel-Met in upstate New York, CVC's most recent campsite. For many of the inner city youth who were recruited in CVC's first year, this was their first trip into the country -- away from crowds, traffic, entertainment, the old neighborhood and other distractions of city life. Thus, at a critical time, CVC's training camp provided some of the benefits of a residential youth corps experience to youth in a non-residential program -- an opportunity to instill *esprit de corps* and organizational values in a setting where competing interests were minimal.

Trainees are met at the bus by CVC training staff and immediately undergo to a search of their persons and belongings. Trainees found with drugs, alcohol or dangerous implements are immediately terminated and their contraband disposed of. It is only after this search, and after first day KP assignments, that trainees are welcomed. Often first day activities include fitness testing, an orientation to basic tools and, most important, an overview of training and the corps' rules and expectations for trainees. The director of training carefully reviews the CV code of conduct with the entire trainee group; it is subsequently reinforced by the team leaders in small group meetings.

Rules forbid drinking; possession, use and/or sale of illegal drugs; fighting or threatening behavior; destruction of property; theft; possession of weapons; cohabitation; and unauthorized tardiness or absences. Expectations include respect for staff and other trainees, full participation in all activities, and cooperation. Any violation of the rules is grounds for immediate termination -- or, in camp parlance, "next bus out." Consistent failure to meet expectations also results in termination if sustained beyond a series of warnings and reprimands.

Training during the first year was initially a 12-day residential experience with a "boot camp" flavor. Days begin early -- at 5:30 A.M. -- with wake-up and physical training. The day's activities proceed through first aid training, work orientation, ropes training, communication skills training, actual work projects (building a boat rack, painting indoors), wellness training (health, fitness, freedom from substance abuse), lectures on various aspects of the CVC experience, and team meetings until lights out at 10:30 P.M. Many of the lectures focus on the concept of physical and human service and the characteristics of the special populations -- children, the homeless, the elderly, the disabled -- with whom the CVs will work in human service projects. During training camp, each trainee takes a standardized academic test in order to determine educational needs.

The sheer number of hours, from dawn well into the night, are a key part of training camp's intensive physical component. In addition, trainees follow a physical regimen similar to that of Outward Bound -- the Outdoor Initiative Team Training (OITT). These are challenging tasks that everyone, regardless of their fears or physical condition, must attempt and make progress towards conquering.

CVC's director of training, a deputy director and two trainers carry out this intensive effort. Representatives from various other parts of CVC -- including team leaders and a number of seasoned CVs -- also have roles in training, whether leading a discussion or giving an inspirational talk. In addition, numerous specialists and consultants have been utilized -- including retired teamsters who supervise work projects and medical personnel who respond to the illnesses and injuries that inevitably occur.

It is predictable that a number of youth will not complete training; 15 percent of all trainees do not make it through training camp. Some depart early -- they're homesick, their attitudes and behavior are clearly inappropriate, etc. A few leave for medical reasons -- illness, injuries, hidden disabilities. However, as will be discussed in later sections of this chapter, the largest number leave because of rules infractions.

Near the end of training camp, after most of the pre-service attrition has occurred, trainees receive permanent team assignments. Assignments are made with demographic and residential diversity in mind. The 12 or so CVs who are assigned to a team enter service together and remain on the same team as long as they serve.

It is at training camp that CVC staff first get a sense of what kind of young people their trainees are. Training staff have been struck with how needy many of the recruits have been. Many have serious home and family problems, and could profit from counseling and support services. Staff find a particularly difficult challenge in the mandate to instill a service ethic in trainees whose own basic needs go unmet. CVC has sought to show its trainees that as needy as they are, there are others in even more dire straits to whom they can render service. While the presentations on needs and characteristics of CVC target populations by CVC staff and experienced CVs introduce trainees to the service ethic, as Chapters IV and V will discuss, they appear to learn best after they enter the field.

The residential training camp is seen by CVC as one of its strongest accomplishments. In an assessment of the first year, CVC's executive director said that training had up to that point met its major goals of screening out inappropriate youth and instilling team spirit among those who remained. He deemed these significant achievements, more than was expected of a training program that was put together under the pressure of the early program period.

The financial costs of training were high -- approximately $700 per trainee (including training stipends and training staff costs) for the first five training cycles. It also pulled training staff away from CVC headquarters for significant periods of time, limiting their opportunities to observe actual field operations and make more informed assessments of the effectiveness of training. At the same time, concern was high that aggregate recruitment goals were not being met. These forces combined to inspire CVC to experiment with a series of shortened, non-residential training camps. Held in Camp Goodhue in Staten Island over a four-week period between May and June, CVC conducted five four-day training cycles. Two days were taken up with educational testing and physical training, leaving two days for orientation, screening and basic CVC training. Evenings and nights could not be utilized, since trainees returned to their homes after each day's sessions.

Even though the non-residential training camps reduced costs, they were terminated because CVC staff believed that, as implemented, they had not met the goals of training. Training staff felt that they neither had the opportunity to sift through the trainees and weed out the obviously unsuitable ones, nor had they been able to build esprit de corps. CVs coming through the non-residential cycles bore something of a stigma. In the field, concerns remained that "the Staten Islanders" did not know the rules of the game. They were watched very closely by staff and were not easily accepted by other CVs.

In the judgment of the executive director, none of the achievements of residential training were apparent in the non-residential cycle. As a result CVC reinstated residential training, but the term was reduced from 12 to seven days. Training staff were instructed to retain those elements of the 12-day regimen that were essential to the inculcation of organizational values -- especially the development of a service ethic and the belief that a CV can be a service provider -- and to delay those elements such as CPR or first aid training that could be imparted through free training resources or by the team leader after the CVs enter service. Thereafter, training was rescheduled so that two week-long training cycles took place back-to-back, giving training staff longer periods in the office.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CITY VOLUNTEERS

In its first year, CVC recruited 1,261 young New Yorkers, 1,071 of whom completed training camp and entered service. CVC thus immediately became the largest urban youth corps program in operation in the United States. The sections below present the characteristics of the young people entering training between October 1984 and October 1985, a group that constitutes the first 12 cycles of CVs. Included in this presentation are the characteristics of the CVs in Cycle I who, because they were the first group to be recruited and trained, are considered a pilot group. Based upon what was learned from their recruitment and training, CVC conducted an intensive period of review and modification of methods and procedures. These modifications were put into effect for subsequent cycles of youth beginning with Cycle II, which entered training two months later.

The characteristics for Cycle I youths are included in this analysis because the data demonstrate that they do not differ significantly from youths subsequently recruited, and because their inclusion permits an examination of CVs' choices among the readjustment/scholarship options that would otherwise be impossible.

To recapitulate CVC's eligibility requirements: in order to be eligible to participate in CVC, a young person need only be between the ages of 17 and 20, a resident of New York City, and if not a high school graduate, out of school at least two months. Beyond this, CVC established the goal of recruiting a group of CVs who were broadly representative of the city racial and socioeconomic diversity, half of them high school graduates.

Table III.2 presents the characteristics of the 1,261 young people who were recruited and trained in CVC's first year of operation. For purposes of comparison, it also presents the characteristics of the 674 youth who were active as of October 31, 1985 -- the end of the study period.

As Table III.2 indicates, 58 percent of CVs are male and 42 percent are female. This is a higher percentage of females than have been attracted to other youth corps. P/PV studies suggest that human services work seems particularly attractive to young women.

Diversity

In its first year of operation, CVC did not meet its stated goal of attracting youth representative of the racial, educational, socioeconomic and geographic variety of New York City.

Ethnic diversity was not achieved: 75 percent of CVC's trainees were black, 21 percent Hispanic, and two percent white. This distribution should be compared with the racial characteristics of New York's 17-to-20-year-old population which, according to the 1980 Census was 51 percent white, 31 percent black, and 25 percent Hispanic. Even when one looks at the characteristics of New York's high school drop-out population (24.4% white, 32.9% black, and 41% Hispanic), it is clear that the CVs do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of New York City youth.

No technique can be said to have been successful in recruiting whites since so few whites were ever recruited. It should be pointed out, however, that the source responsible for the largest number of whites -- 35 percent -- was community groups. A number of referral sources were differentially effective in recruiting blacks and Hispanics. Friends and high schools were better sources for recruiting blacks, while the media and other schools were a better source for recruiting Hispanics.

When one examines the educational characteristics of trainees, it is clear that the goal of recruiting 50 percent high school graduates was not met. In fact, only 22 percent of the sample had graduated from high school; 78 percent had neither graduated from high school nor earned a GED. On average, the highest grade completed by CVs was the 10th grade (10.1). Sixty-six percent of trainees had reading levels below the eighth grade.

As Table III.1 shows, the most effective sources for the recruitment of both high school graduates and non-graduates were community groups (24.1% of all high school graduates; 27% of all non-graduates) and the CVC poster (23.1% of all high school graduates and 30% of all non-graduates). The fact that the CVC poster was even more effective in recruiting non-graduates is puzzling since it goes counter to the aims of this strategy.

Table III.2

Characteristics of City Volunteers

	Percent or Mean, by Sample	
Characteristics	All Trainees	CVs Active as of 10/85
Sex		
Male	58.0%	52.4%
Female	42.0	47.6
Race		
Black	75.3%	74.2%
Hispanic	20.5	21.0
White	2.1	2.4
Other	2.1	2.4
High School Graduate	21.9%	30.6%
Mean Age in Years	17.2	18.0
Mean Grade Completed	10.1	10.4
Marital Status		
Single	98.4%	99.1%
Currently married	0.8	0.5
Previously married	0.8	0.4
Borough		
Brooklyn	46.0%	49.4%
Bronx	23.1	22.7
Manhattan	16.1	14.8
Queens	11.5	10.2
Staten Island	3.3	2.2
Percent With Own Children In Residence	11.0%	10.5%
Household size	5.2	5.2
Primary Wage Earner	8.5%	7.6%

Table III.2 - (cont'd)

Characteristics of City Volunteers

Characteristics	Percent or Mean, By Sample All Trainees	 CVs Active as of 10/85
AFDC Receipt Past 6 Months	15.6%	15.5%
Food Stamps in Past 6 Months	31.8%	30.7%
AFDC or Food Stamps in Past 6 Months	34.8%	33.7%
Helped in the Community	28.0%	29.2%
Volunteered for Charity	18.6%	20.9%
Gave Blood	4.3%	4.4%
Prefer to Work with Own Race?		
Strongly Agree	39.6%	39.6%
Agree	25.4	23.2
Neither Agree nor Agree	18.1	18.8
Disagree	7.9	8.0
Strongly Disagree	9.0	10.4
Total Trainees	1,261	674

Beyond these efforts, presentations at high schools were a good recruitment technique for high school graduates -- 19 percent of all high school graduates first heard of CVC from this source while only 11 percent of non-graduates heard about it this way. High schools, thus, were the only sources that were differentially effective in reaching high school graduates. On the other hand, non-graduates were more likely than graduates to hear about CVC from friends (11.5% versus 7.7%).

It is difficult to gauge whether CVC met its goal of attaining a mix of socioeconomic backgrounds in its first year of operation since income data for the families of CVs are not available. However, the application included a number of items that serve as proxies for economic disadvantage. For instance, 16 percent of trainees came from families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and 32 percent were from families utilizing Food Stamps. Almost 35 percent of all trainees came from families that received either food stamps or AFDC. Thus, more than a third of CVs were economically disadvantaged by virtue of public assistance receipt -- AFDC or food stamps. Moreover, CVs came from large households -- with an average of 5.2 residents. A substantial percentage, 11 percent, had children of their own living with them, although fewer than two percent had been married.

Another commonly used measure of disadvantage is one that takes into account educational qualifications -- whether or not a youth is at risk in the labor market by virtue of a lack of a high school diploma. According to this definition, the 78 percent of CVs who did not have a diploma at program entry would be considered disadvantaged.

What the data do not speak to at all is whether there are youth from relatively advantaged backgrounds among the CVs. It would be incorrect to assume that those youth who do not receive public assistance necessarily come from middle-income families. However most observers, including CVC staff, believe that there is very little economic diversity among CVs. They are fairly uniformly a low-income group.

For geographic diversity, it was a CVC goal to recruit youth from throughout New York City, in roughly the same proportions as there are 18-year-olds in the five boroughs. According to 1980 census data, the percentage of 18-year-olds residing in Brooklyn was 34 percent; Queens, 24 percent; the Bronx, 20 percent; Manhattan, 17 percent; and Staten Island, 5 percent. An examination of the data in Table III.2 makes it clear that this goal was met for youth from the Bronx and Manhattan, and was approached for youth from the other boroughs, though Brooklyn was somewhat over-represented and Queens and Staten Island under-represented.

As with other youth corps programs P/PV has studied, CVC included a number of questions in its application form designed to tap its recruits' volunteer experiences and social attitudes towards working with people from backgrounds different from their own. These measures are intended to provide an indication of how well these programs achieve the goal of inculcating positive values and increasing social harmony among youth from different backgrounds. These data show that, at enrollment, 28 percent of CVC trainees reported having helped in their communities; 18.6 percent having volunteered for charity; and four percent having given blood. Thus the trainees entered CVC with some volunteer experience, although it did not appear extensive.

These data also reveal a clear preference among CVC trainees to work with members of their own races -- 25.4 percent agreed and 39.5 percent agreed strongly that they preferred working with members of their own race. These data will be examined again in P/PV's final report on CVC in order to determine if any change in this variable has occurred as a result of the CVC experience.

Implications of the Current Participant Profile

The fact that CVC fielded a smaller group than projected, and one heavily weighted toward out-of-school minority youth, has important implications. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter V, the fact that so many CVs were seriously in need of remediation suggests the need for a more intensive educational component than was anticipated. By CVC's own estimate, the majority of CVs entering the program without a high school diploma require four-to-five months of Adult Basic Education before they qualify for GED classes. This makes it highly unlikely that many could actually take advantage of CVC's scholarship option at the end of 12 months.

The low enrollment of whites has limited CVC's ability to achieve its social integration goals -- providing CVs with an opportunity to work interdependently with youth from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Perhaps more important for the long-term viability of CVC, the absence of white youth may brand it a minority program and, by extension, a jobs or poverty program. So labeled, it may be difficult to reap the benefits -- a broadbased constituency, an ability to avoid whatever stigma is attached to programs for the poor -- that youth corps programs have traditionally enjoyed.

CVC's director believes that it is of the utmost importance to the mayor, the CVC board and the city-at-large that CVC be racially and economically diverse. In his opinion, it is unlikely that CVs will be seen as providers of service if they are all low-income minority youth. Moreover, it is difficult to maintain the perception that CVC is not a program for disadvantaged youth if middle-income youth do not participate. Staff members also

also believe that a more racially balanced corps would contribute to maintaining sponsor support. A New York Times article reported an isolated incident in which CVC lost a sponsor because white elderly clients were fearful of black CVs.

CVC's first-year experience raises a number of new questions about the target population for youth corps programs. At one point in the development of youth conservation and service corps around the nation, it appeared important to ask if in a program which does not restrict its eligibility would serve economically disadvantaged youth. However, a number of studies -- on the California Conservation Corps, the Marin Conservation Corps, and the San Francisco Conservation Corps (P/PV, 1985) -- have demonstrated that economically disadvantaged youth are served in these programs. Of equal policy importance is the question of whether, in a non-targeted, urban non-residential program, non-poor or middle-income youth will come forward in numbers large enough to meet both the social integration and political constituency-building aims of the youth corps movement. The characteristics of the first City Volunteers call this into question.

ATTRITION

While it is important to understand the recruitment and training experiences of CVC, it is also important to understand the size and make-up of the corps that it fielded on a day-to-day basis after attrition. The active membership of the corps determines CVC's ability to meet both its work commitments and many of its youth development goals.

At the end of the study period on October 31, 1985, CVC had 674 active corpsmembers. While much larger numbers of youth had been recruited, trained and had entered service, attrition had reduced the numbers of youth available for service at any given time. This section focuses on the attrition experiences of the young people who participated in CVC during the study period. It examines their length of stay in the program, their reasons for leaving, and the options among CVC's cash and scholarship awards they selected upon leaving.

It is very important that these data be regarded as preliminary. First, they come from a period in which CVC was developing the program -- simultaneously building systems, developing projects, and recruiting and fielding participants. Data coming from the developmental period of a program are unlikely to be typical of the recruitment and attrition experiences of the program once it has stabilized. More important, only one cohort of CVs had been in the program long enough to complete a full year of service during this study period. As a result, findings concerning length of stay in the program are based on the experiences of the small number of CVs who formed CVC's pilot cohort.

Attrition Rates and Patterns

Between October 1984 and October 1985, 1,261 young people completed applications, were accepted as trainees and entered CVC's training camp. Of these trainees, 190 (or 15 percent) dropped out of the program during training camp and never entered the field or received an assignment as a CV. Nearly half of all trainees, 674, were still active at the end of the year.

Since this is the first year of operation for CVC, only the 65 CVs in the pilot group were in the program long enough to complete a year of service: mean length of stay for this group was 210 days -- just over six months, the minimum period for qualifying for an adjustment award.

An average length of stay of six months for the pilot cohort is remarkably high when one considers that the mean length of stay for the California Conservation Corps -- the oldest youth conservation corps program in operation in the United States -- is only 5.1 months. This unusual program retention seems related to two factors: the special nature of the small pilot group which, for several months before CVC recruited its next cohort, commanded the full attention of virtually a full complement of staff and, perhaps, CVC's incentive structure that makes CVs eligible for a cash or scholarship award only after a minimum of six months in the program.

Because the pilot group experience may not be mirrored by subsequent groups, it is important to analyze length of stay for all youth entering CVC during this period. The best approach to the analysis of these data would be to identify a group entering CVC at the same time and to examine length of stay after they have all had an opportunity to remain in the program for a year. As noted, given the October 31, 1985 deadline for inclusion of data on the behavior and characteristics of participants, this was possible only for the pilot group. The fuller analysis, determining length of stay for larger numbers of CVs, will be undertaken in P/PV's final report on CVC. For this report more cycles of CVs will have had the opportunity to complete a full year in the program.

When the attrition experiences of the young people who did leave the program within the study period are examined separately (Table III.3), one finds that 29 percent leave within the first week. The rigor of the training camp -- with its strict enforcement of the rules and the specific goal of weeding out youth who are inappropriate -- is a major source of this early attrition. Because of variations in the length of the training camp, however, leaving within the first week and leaving training camp are not synonymous. CVC's departure rate for the first week is very similar to that of the San Francisco Conservation Corps

Table III.3

Length of Stay by Group for CVs Leaving Program by October 31, 1985

Time in Program	Pilot Group	Entire Group
0-7 Days	10.8%	29.0%
8-28 Days	7.7	6.9
29-56 Days	6.2	14.3
57-112 Days	9.2	26.2
113 Days or More	66.2%	23.6%

(SFCC), where 25 percent of all youth who leave do so in the first week of the program.

Once past the first week, there is a fall-off in departures, such that a total of 36 percent of the youth who leave the corps will have done so by the end of their first month in CVC. By contrast, youth in SFCC continue to leave the program at a high rate during this period, with about half (51%) of all corpsmembers who leave doing so in their first month in the corps.

Reasons for Separation

When the characteristics of those trainees who did and did not drop out of training camp were examined, only one significant difference emerged: high school graduates were significantly less likely to drop out of training camp than non-graduates. While the overall training camp drop-out rate was 15 percent, it was 23.6 percent for youth who had dropped out of high school and only 12.2 percent for high school graduates. About one-quarter of training camp dropouts left of their own volition, while three-quarters left at the request of training staff. Terminations far outweighed voluntary separations, as staff attempted to sift through the trainees and decide who would be appropriate for CVC. Among the primary reasons staff asked trainees to leave were poor task performance (34%); problems adjusting (20.9%); and a series of rules infractions including use of alcohol or drugs, insubordination, fighting and violence (all combined, 17.7%). When CVs left voluntarily, dissatisfaction with the experience was the primary reason given (16%).

Looking at all CVs -- those who separated during training or service -- reasons for leaving are fairly balanced between the voluntary and involuntary. As Table III.4 shows, 48 percent of all CVs who left within the study period left for reasons of their own. Twenty-one percent simply stopped attending, with no further reason given. The next largest group (8.3%) left with a readjustment award, having completed a minimum of six months in the program and given no other reason for leaving; seven percent left because of dissatisfaction with the program; and just under three percent left because of family problems. Fifty-two percent of the CVs who left the program did so at the request of CVC: 12 percent were dismissed for failure to meet CVC's standards of attendance and punctuality, 19 percent were dismissed for insubordination or other rules infractions, and 13 percent were dismissed for poor performance. There was remarkably little difference between males and females in their reasons for leaving CVC.

By contrast, there were numerous differences in the separation reasons of high school graduates and non-graduates. High school graduates were significantly less likely than non-graduates to be terminated by CVC. Similarly, their rates of dismissal for

Table III.4

Reasons for Separation

All Voluntary		48%
Stopped Attending	20.8%	
Left with Cash or Scholarship Award	8.3	
Dissatisfied	7.1	
Pursue Job or School	5.6	
Family Problems	2.7	
All Other Voluntary Reasons	3.5	
All Involuntary Reasons		52%
Rules Infractions	18.7%	
Poor Performance	13.4	
Attendance and Lateness	12.3	
Problems Adjusting	7.6	

attendance and lateness or rules infractions were lower than those of non-graduates. They were more likely than non-graduates to leave for voluntary reasons, such as accepting a job or leaving with a readjustment award after a minimum period of service.

By November 1985, 51 youth, or eight percent of all youth who had left the program, had remained long enough to qualify for a cash readjustment award. Of those, 44 left after six months of service; five left after nine months. The overwhelming majority -- 46 youth (90%) -- elected the cash readjustment allowance of $1,000 after six months or $1,750 after nine months. Four CVs -- three at six months and one at nine -- elected scholarships of $2,000 and $3,500 respectively. One CV, after a six-month tenure, elected a combination of $500 in cash and a $1,000 scholarship.

SUMMARY

After an initial period of relying heavily upon a network of agencies that primarily served out of school minority youth, CVC implemented a more varied recruitment strategy, including presentations at high schools and a CVC poster. These two approaches proved effective in bringing to CVC a significant percentage of all the youth recruited. Through these and other strategies, CVC was, by the end of the study period, able to field a corps of 674 CVs -- thus becoming the largest urban youth corps program in the country. This number fell short of the 800 youth originally projected, however, and the racial and ethnic diversity that had been envisioned was not attained. Low enrollment of middle class and white youth may have implications for the delivery of service, the accomplishment of youth development goals and perhaps the long-term viability of the program.

The youth who were recruited attended a 12-day residential training camp, the goals of which were to screen out inappropriate youth and socialize those who remained to organizational values. Because of the high cost of residential training, CVC experimented with a shorter, non-residential training camp. However, the residential training experience was considered so superior to the non-residential experiment that CVC reaffirmed its commitment to the residential approach. In keeping with budgetary concerns, however, residential training was reduced to seven days.

Data on attrition and length of stay are limited for reasons that have already been discussed. CVC's pilot group, the only group that could have completed a full year of service within the study period, stayed in the program just over six months, on average. This unusually long program stay seems due, in part, to CVC's cash or scholarship award that is only available after a minimum of six months in the program.

Consistent with CVC's commitment to deliver high quality services to the City of New York, the majority of terminations have been because of poor attendance, chronic lateness, or unwillingness to abide by CVC's code of conduct. This highlights the tension between CVC's need to maintain high standards and the need to field a force large enough to meet its work commitments. Because high school graduates are less likely than non-graduates to be dismissed from the corps, the recruitment of more high school graduates might alleviate this problem. It is also possible that the recruitment of older youth -- which CVC initiated in July 1985 -- will result in greater service to the city.

IV. WORK AND SERVICE

Work is CVC's principal vehicle for achieving its mission "to provide the city with services of real and lasting value in a manner that challenges young adults, promotes their personal development and enhances their education opportunities." As such, work has two purposes. Its primary purpose is providing service to the city, and will be discussed in this chapter. Work's second function, as a youth development strategy, will be taken up in the following chapter.

This chapter proceeds in three sections. The first part addresses project development; the second part describes projects undertaken by the Corps. The chapter concludes with an assessment of CVC's service component during the first year.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECTS

The Program and Project Planning Department is responsible for developing the Corps' roster of physical and human service work projects. During the first year, it pursued a two-part strategy of project development, casting its net widely for three-quarters of CVC work hours and concentrating on a single city agency, the Department of Parks and Recreation, for the remaining quarter. This approach was designed to promote a number of different agendas: to develop a broad constituency for the Corps, demonstrate commitment to an important city agency, maintain enough projects to sustain its intended size, and test out a variety of different projects and sponsors.

As part of its development strategy, CVC seeks a diversified portfolio of projects. It also looks for projects that will promote youth development in the process of providing service. Though it is not necessary for each CVC project to be strong on both counts, CVC seeks an overall mix of projects that contribute to these two objectives.

Development Criteria

The fundamental test of a potential CVC project is need. If strong need exists, CVC is likely to pursue the project even if youth development opportunities are absent; planners may decide to work with the sponsor of such a project to build in some elements that could promote personal growth. Conversely, a project that does not show potential for fulfilling a service need is unlikely to be developed even if it is full of possibilities for learning.

Beyond need and youth development potential, there is a second level of development criteria. Work sponsors must be a non-profit or public agency, and must agree to supply necessary training, worksite supervision, supplies, materials and equipment. The Corps prefers projects that have definable and measurable goals, recognizing that this objective is more easily attainable in physical projects than in human service projects. Maintenance projects are consistently avoided.

Projects are expected to sustain full-time work for a CVC team and to be appropriate for a diverse group of 17- to 20-year-olds. They are expected to last a least a month, but not to require a particular team to remain for more than five months. Other factors, such as a project's public relations potential, political significance, geographic location and innovation also carry some weight that varies with circumstances.

Development Process

The development process has changed somewhat over time. In the early days, the executive director and director of planning conducted outreach efforts, acting as emissaries of the mayor on behalf of this special new initiative. Commissioners of city agencies, borough presidents, and consortia of human service organizations were approached, high level presentations were made and the services of CVC were offered. All of this occurred before any CVs were enrolled. As the Corps moved out of the start-up phase, outreach became more carefully targeted. Specific sponsors and project areas were identified and targeted. In addition, repeat sponsors and sponsor referrals came to represent a greater portion of the project portfolio.

Following outreach, the development process is straightforward. Potential sponsors fill out forms outlining the project and negotiations between the sponsor and project planners begin. Planners take this opportunity to explain to sponsors what they can realistically expect from a CVC team and the procedures for handling a crew. Often a site visit is made so the planner can confer with the person designated as the direct work supervisor. This contact enables CVC to avoid booking projects in which executive interest is strong, but staff interest in working with CVs is low or negative.

Following negotiations, CVC prepares a series of documents, including a letter from the CVC executive director to the chief of the sponsoring agency, declaring CVC's commitment to perform the project, starting and ending dates for the work, expected results, materials and supplies needed, and an outline of tasks. The letter reminds the sponsor of supervisory, training and equipment responsibilities. This letter is supported in greater detail by the Team Leader Briefing Document, a blueprint covering all the major aspects involved in conducting a project. A letter is also sent to appropriate elected and appointed officials, informing them of CVC's intent to perform a project in their jurisdiction.

In addition to providing CVC and the work sponsor with a record of their undertaking, this documentation also helps orient team leaders and CVs to a new assignment and can be invoked to keep a forgetful or misinformed sponsor from straying too far from the mutual agreement.

THE PROJECTS

By the end of 1985, the Corps had performed over half a million total hours of service in the city's five boroughs. This time was divided between physical projects, constituting 56 percent of CV hours, and human service work, which accounted for 44 percent of hours worked. These figures include signature projects. A total of 238 projects were completed. The majority (60%) were sponsored by city agencies including the Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Human Resources Administration, Police, Fire, Sanitation, Transportation, Environmental Protection, City Planning, Consumer Affairs, the Board of Education, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Non-profit organizations sponsored 40 percent of completed projects.

The following section describes and discusses the types of CVC projects.

Physical Projects

These projects constituted 56 percent of CVC's work hours in the first year, and consist overwhelmingly of Department of Parks and Recreation projects, community conservation and horticultural projects, and renovation and rehabilitation projects.

Department of Parks and Recreation projects amounted to nearly half of all physical projects and one-third of CVC's service hours overall. CVC has a standing commitment, part of the Corps' contract with the city, to provide this level of services to the department. The following are examples of these projects:

- CVC created three new nature trails in a park, and then drove in trail posts, punched braille markings, repainted tin caps on top of posts, prepared and installed trail signs and directional arrows. After completing this work, CVs helped to plan and conduct tours along the trail.

- CVs rehabilitated a public golf course and did extensive horticultural work in sections around another park, including bush and tree pruning, cribbing and planting rhododendrons.

- CVs did horticultural work on the terraces and slopes surrounding a children's museum. They removed weeds, prevented soil erosion and turned over soil.

- CVs converted two sitting areas into lawns, restored the turf on two soccer and volleyball fields and cleaned up a lake, creek and fountain.

- As part of a park's bicycle safety effort, CVs warned cyclists to slow down and yield to pedestrians and distributed flyers and educational brochures on bicycle rules and safety.

Community conservation and horticultural projects have usually been undertaken for non-profit organizations. Some examples of this work are:

- As part of Project Greenthumb, CVs cleared, fenced and planted community gardens to be maintained by neighborhood residents.

- At a botanical garden in one borough, CVs spruced up the demonstration gardens; weeded, cleared and tilled an arboretum; and cleared mulch from woodland areas.

- At another botanical garden, CVs worked with staff to clear a steep hill on an adjacent piece of land recently acquired by the gardens. The CVs prepared the area for a rhododendron garden.

Renovation and rehabilitation projects are of two types. Some involve major rehabilitation of buildings, for example:

- CVs converted a roller skating rink into a 99-seat theatre for a non-profit theatre group in preparation for the opening of its first production.

- CVs repainted and renovated the interior of America's oldest settlement house, the first step in a large scale physical and programmatic overhaul of the institution. CVs also helped to staff the settlement's Head Start and senior citizen programs.

- CVs helped to restore an abandoned school building that will be used as a cultural center for residents of the Lower East Side.

Other projects primarily involved painting, for example:

- o At a ferry terminal, CVs scraped the exterior pedestrian ramp; painted corridors, stairways and the waiting room; and cleaned tiles and steps.
- o CVs painted the Staten Island ferries.
- o CVs painted over or removed graffiti from public places and designated commercial establishments as part of an anti-graffiti campaign.

Human Service Projects

CVC's human service work has ranged widely, but focused particularly on assistance to the elderly, tutoring and literacy, aid to the physically and developmentally disabled, and survey projects. The following briefly describes some examples of work in these areas:

Assistance to the Elderly

- o In a home for the aged, CVs worked on five skilled nursing units providing care to the frail elderly.
- o In apartments of the homebound elderly, CVs visited and performed heavy duty cleaning that enabled these people to remain in their homes.
- o CVs made home visits to hospice out-patients, providing consistent volunteer support to augment the work of the hospital staff.
- o CVs painted an entire senior center, then moved into providing human services for the homebound, which included delivering meals, shopping, escort services and some apartment painting and heavy duty cleaning.

Tutoring was provided by CVs as part of the New York City School Volunteer program:

- o CVs tutored children in school who were achieving below grade level -- including children with learning disabilities and those who are learning English as a second language.
- o CVs taught English to Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees.

Aid to the Physically and Developmentally Disabled

- As part of the psychiatric rehabilitation service of a hospital, CVs provided individualized supervision in recreational programs designed especially for developmentally and physically disabled youngsters.
- CVs helped severely retarded adults in a workshop, producing pens and framing pictures.
- CVs taught basic life skills to very severely retarded adults.

Survey Projects

- CVs surveyed every public facility in Queens to determine its accessibility to the disabled.
- CVs conducted observations and a survey to learn why a park's recreational areas were under-used, and then did physical work on areas identified as needing it by the study.
- CVs interviewed clients at 29 DFTA-funded senior centers throughout the city to determine their service needs. These client profiles, which are required by state and federal funding sources, were used to plan new services and modify existing ones.
- CVs conducted a phone survey of physicians and residents in several neighborhoods to ascertain the health needs of the area and the services available.

Other Human Service Initiatives

- CVs reorganized the book collection of a community organization's library, expanding on-going reading programs, developing a new film viewing program and researching community resources.
- In East Harlem, CVs taught residents, age three to 73, computer skills and helped them become familiar with software.
- CVs helped to staff voluntary shelters operating under the auspices of the Partnership for the Homeless.

- CVs helped to promote the health of destitute young mothers and their children by preparing them for nurse visits and escorting them to hospitals.
- CVs acted as adjuncts to staff at a shelter for battered women and their children, offering crisis intervention services.
- CVs fed, dressed, diapered and played with 14 infants and toddlers in a residence for children born addicted to drugs.

Signature Services

Signature services are brief, high visibility and high impact efforts undertaken by CVC periodically throughout the year. These services require pulling volunteers off their current projects for periods ranging between a day and a week. In a sample of signature services performed in the first year, the following work was performed:

- CVs cleared debris caused by Hurricane Gloria from public beachfront facilities.
- CVs delivered 246,000 pounds of U. S. Department of Agriculture surplus food to almost 10,000 needy homebound individuals who could not reach central distribution points.
- CVs installed and repaired 1,500 smoke detectors in the homes of elderly people.
- CVs assisted Emergency Medical Services and the Red Cross with the New York City Marathon.

Some of these services, like CVC's work on the New York City Marathon, were one-day efforts designed primarily to expand public exposure to the Corps at work and develop esprit de corps by bringing all of CVC together. Other projects, like the Hurricane Gloria clean-up, had the same goals and also performed a service similar to the emergency fire and flood work undertaken by some other youth service corps.

ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE COMPONENT

CVC planners themselves assess the value of each service project by examining the need, quantity and quality of work performed. This barometer for measuring the Corps' success in providing service to the city is used in this section as well. In applying this measure, P/PV staff visited a wide sampling of worksites;

conducted interviews with CVs, corps' staff, and work sponsors; and reviewed internal documents of CVC.

Need

Performance of Needed Work. The primacy of need has been emphasized in project selection and development and, while the need of some projects is more obvious and compelling than that of others, all appear to have met a legitimate service needed by the city. CVC has been both consistent and innovative in this regard, exploring new ways for CVs to work on New York's evident problems.

Commitment to Human Service Work. CVC has been particularly creative in its human service work. No other youth corps program has undertaken a commitment to human service projects comparable to CVC's. The Corps has worked in dozens of different kinds of human service settings, devoting 44 percent of its labor to this work. Many of these projects have been quite successful, and CVC has already built a base for continued activity in this area.

At the same time, CVC has provided an important model and some clear lessons for other corps considering the incorporation of a human service component. CVC has demonstrated that there is no shortage of needed human service projects in the urban environment of New York, and has identified a range of projects well within the capacity of corpsmembers. Despite their youth and relative inexperience, the volunteers have shown themselves to be effective human service providers, particularly in intergenerational projects that involve CVs working with older adults or with school children, and in projects with the moderately disabled and mentally retarded. CVs brought openness to clients and impressive vitality to this work, sometimes in sharp contrast to the professional staff at a particular human service project. The fact that many CVs are themselves a dependent population makes this achievement even more compelling.

Quantity and Quality

Volume of Work. The Corps set out to work in all five boroughs, do a wide variety of physical and human service work, and perform a large number of projects. It has achieved these objectives in the large, completing a diverse and impressive volume of projects distributed throughout New York City.

At the worksite level, however, the engagement of corpsmembers and their resulting productivity has varied. At some sites the research team observed, CVs worked vigorously and accomplished a great deal. In others, however, corpsmembers were not fully engaged and were working well below their productive capacities. These observations suggest that the quantity of work produced by CVC, while considerable in total, is short of the Corps' potential.

General Work Quality. By and large, CVC's work quality was sufficiently high to meet a project's basic purpose and to help the sponsoring agency. Sponsor referrals and repeat sponsors attested to sponsor satisfaction with the corps' project activity. Quality across projects has varied, however; the research team identified a number of outstanding products as well as some less meritorious efforts.

Despite unevenness, the amount and quality of CVC's work is significant, especially given the difficulty of startup, the recruitment results discussed in Chapter III, the fact that CVs do not bring specific expertise into projects, and the very broad scope of CVC project development. The volunteers have been asked to perform many different kinds of work requiring the use and development of diverse skills. They have generally shown themselves able to learn and perform when given well-defined tasks, a steady flow of work to do, consistent supervision and the right tools.

These four elements were not always present during CVC's first year of operations, however. The research team observed that insufficient work and inadequate tools were provided in some physical work settings, primarily those of the parks department; that inadequate worksite management sometimes resulted in debilitating downtime in both physical and human service projects; that complications in performing human service work posed some problems; and that the sheer variety of project types limited advance planning. To establish greater consistency in its work and close in on its service potential, CVC will need to resolve these issues.

Sufficiency of Work and/or Equipment. In a number of physical work projects, primarily those sponsored by the department of parks and recreation, the amount of time scheduled for CVs to do the work was seriously overestimated. And provisions were not made to rotate them out of such assignments as quickly as the work was done. As a result, the teams on these projects had a production schedule that provided little incentive to work hard and left time for idleness on the worksite. Parks department projects were also plagued by the untimely provision of tools and supplies.

Some efforts have been made to mitigate these problems. CVC hired a project planner with special expertise in blending environmental and social concerns and assigned him to work primarily with the parks department. CVC staff have also become more familiar with individual parks department supervisors and projects, and have developed an improved supply route that provides CVC greater control and circumvents the department's decentralized supply system.

In human service projects, CVs were sometimes unoccupied between tasks. This issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

Adequacy of Worksite Management. The CVC model calls for supervision and quality control at the worksite by three interrelated means: work sponsors provide training, direct work supervision and supplies; team leaders supply overall team management; and empowerment, the team's internalization of expectations and standards, enable the crew to perform effectively when supervision is not available.

This model was not fully or consistently implemented in the first year. On physical projects, work sponsors frequently did not provide direct worksite supervision, requiring the team leader to step in and assume this role. On human service projects, where work sponsors generally assumed the supervisory role, team leaders in many cases had difficulty finding a complementary team management role for themselves. Empowerment was, for all intents and purposes, not tried. Team leaders were not aware of their responsibilities for engendering empowerment, and did not act to foster its development.

Confusion over supervision and inconsistent execution of supervisory responsibilities weakened CVC's quality control during the start-up period, a problem accentuated by the decentralized nature of the corps' field operations. However, in many cases, team leaders were able to fill in as direct work supervisors on physical projects, and most human service sponsors provided adequate work supervision. Problems did occur when team leaders were required by other duties or regular vacation time to be absent from the worksite. During these absences, borough coordinators checked on teams but, in many cases, performance slowed and sometimes stopped entirely in the absence both of the work sponsor and team leader.

Complexities of Managing Human Service Delivery. In many human service projects, the pace of work is dependent on the episodic needs of clients. Unless provisions are made to keep volunteers busy in the interim, they can lose interest or fail to develop a constructive attitude toward work.

Downtime also occurs when human service projects, including some of the most interesting, simply do not have enough work to sustain a full team. CVC therefore decided in many cases to permit split crews in order to perform human service projects. In these instances, team members are divided; one group may work at the human service agency while others go off in pairs into the community.

This division can be damaging to team unity and spirit. Therefore, CVC employs a variety of techniques to preserve team cohesiveness during a split site or split team project, including special emphasis on regular weekly team meetings. Most of the responsibility falls on the team leader, who tries to preserve unity until the next assignment. Following a split crew human service project, CVC tries to assign a team to a physical project, allowing the CVs to work together in close proximity.

Transition into a human service site tends to be much more difficult and delicate than into a physical worksite. An important innovation in easing the transition to human service assignments developed out of a project the corps was performing for New York City's Department for the Aging (DFTA). DFTA hired a contractor to perform cleaning and physical improvements for agencies serving the elderly. Three CVC crews assisted with the "spruce-up" work and, after its completion, worked directly with clients for a few weeks. Because the clients were accustomed to CVs from their work on the "spruce-up" and the CVs were familiar with the clients, the transition to human service work was greatly eased. The physical project also allowed the sponsor to develop confidence in the CVs and gain exposure to their talents. CVC has employed this model in a number of other sites with comparable success.

CVC has also created in its second year a Special Projects option to enable CVs to perform human service assignments that cannot sustain a full team. These individual placements are offered competitively to CVs who have done well in their first six months in the Corps. Once accepted for a Special Projects placement, the CV is to remain with this assignment for the remainder of his or her time in the program.

Human service projects that send CVs into the homes of elderly people or that involve work with fragile clients require considerable care, sensitivity, and attention to client safety. In the first year, CVs have shown themselves capable of handling these delicate responsibilities.

Scope of Project Development. CVC's initiation entailed not only starting from scratch to develop numerous work projects, but also moving into a new arena for youth corps -- large scale human service work. The pressure on CVC simultaneously to experiment and to produce was great. As a result, some types of projects worked better than others; sponsors varied in commitment and skill.

In its second year, CVC began to address this issue. It is consolidating its project areas and attempting to develop expertise in each; it is reducing the amount of effort devoted to developing entirely new types of work. In the human service area, projects dealing with the homeless, elderly, and education and literacy for school children will be emphasized, while parks improvements and environmental projects will receive special focus among physical projects. CVC will also attempt to cultivate a second large city agency capable of sponsoring a sizeable number of projects during the course of the year.

It is difficult to gauge how successful CVC will be in resolving the issues in these areas. A number of measures addressing them have been adopted, however, it is to soon to determine clear results. The Corps' success in refining the scope of its project development, increasing efficiency in managing the delivery of human services, and increasing the engagement of CVs through improving project planning and supervision will be critical in determining how well CVC will be able to build on its service achievement of the first year and how fully it can realize the enormous service potential it has displayed thus far.

V. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY VOLUNTEER CORPS

This chapter discusses the CVC approach to youth development -- the Corps' efforts to promote the personal growth of participating youth. In contrast to the features of the program that benefit the primary client -- New York City and its neediest citizens -- youth development features are intended to provide benefits to the CVs themselves.

The youth development goals to be discussed include those specified by CVC and those that can be inferred from program design. The inculcation of a sense of service and the promotion of social harmony appear prominently in CVC's goal statements. The emphasis on improving the educational attainment of participating youth and improving participants' work-related attitudes and behavior, while not explicitly a part of the goals statement, can be inferred from program structure.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SERVICE ETHIC

One of the more salient of the CVC youth development goals, the development of a service ethic, is also one of the more difficult to conceptualize, measure or assess. A number of issues arise in understanding this goal and determining the extent to which it was achieved for the young people who participated in CVC's first year of operation.

What is a service ethic, and how can it be recognized? When the service ethic or a sense of service is discussed in CVC documents, several themes are dominant. These include, first, helping CVs to become aware of and sympathetic toward the plights of others -- the homeless, the elderly, the disabled of New York City. Thus, much of what CVC hopes to attain in developing a service ethic is dependent upon the human services work that the CVs will perform. Another aspect of this goal is to help CVs develop a sense that they are capable of rendering services that improve the conditions under which other people live, even though many CVs are themselves quite needy. CVC is adamant in asserting that CVs are providers of service, not service recipients. The client is New York City and its neediest citizens -- not the CVs.

Another theme apparent from CVC documents is that CVs are considered volunteers; their $80-per-week payment is defined as a stipend to offset the costs -- transportation to and from worksites, uniforms, lunches -- of volunteering. If one defines a volunteer as someone who renders services to others, with the benefit to the recipient being a more primary motivating factor than the direct financial or legal benefit to the service provider, a number of questions arise as to whether CVs should indeed be considered volunteers.

It is clear from their statements that trainees do not join CVC because they are motivated to help others. They come because they are doing nothing with their lives and want to change that; because they want to continue with their education; or because they need the money. Thus, the more appropriate question is whether by calling them volunteers and structuring their experiences to be consistent with the development of a sense of voluntarism, CVC can expand the perspectives of these young people to include a concern for the needs of others.

The likelihood that they will acquire a sense of voluntarism is complicated by the stipend, which made a significant contribution to the incomes of many of the low-income youth who became CVs in this early program period. At $80 per week, it is roughly comparable to what young people at this skill level could take home from occasional employment. If one considers the value of the cash readjustment or scholarship that comes at the end of CVC service, then the economic value to the CVs is even greater -- superior to the minimum wage employment that would be their alternative outside of CVC. Deferral of the payment of readjustment benefits reduces the issue of compensation, but does not eliminate it as motivation.

It thus seems inescapable that to many of the young people who joined CVC, being a CV is first and foremost a job; sustained efforts may be required before they begin to see it in any other light. Evidence for this comes from the questions and comments of youth in training camp; they are full of questions about payment: When will they get paid? If they are serving the City of New York, why won't they be given tokens to get to and from worksites? Is it really true that they will get all that money at once at the end of the year? Can they do whatever they want with it?

Even though CVs may not be volunteers as customarily defined, there is little reason to believe that the larger youth corps concept is harmed as a result. Indeed, many youth corps programs are self-consciously jobs programs in which youth are hired and fired. Moreover, it is not clear that receiving compensation for activities that benefit others -- being a paid caregiver rather than a volunteer one -- precludes the development of a service ethic. Many people employed in human services occupations respond appropriately to the plight of the needy.

CVC's first systematic effort at inculcating a service ethic comes in training, when CVC staff and consultants make presentations about the needs and characteristics of the people to be served in human services projects, or when experienced CVs make presentations about how they have been affected by their encounters with these service recipients.

The contrast between the statements of youth as they enter training camp, and those of youth in active service, are often dramatic. A young male CV who worked with severely retarded adults provides an example. He was highly praised by the work sponsor for his ability to elicit response from even the most remote of the clients. He, himself, would proudly tell site visitors that one should never give up on these clients. Even those with the mental capacity of infants can make progress, he said, if you have enough patience and give them enough love.

Interviews with CVs and observations of them as they engaged in human service work suggest that CVC is succeeding in inculcating a sense of service in its participants. These young people are being changed by their experience in the Corps from a group who for the most part had never been forced to look beyond their own situations, to a group who has responded successfully and sympathetically to the needs of others on a day-to-day basis.

This is true even though many of the CVs are themselves as needy as the clients to whom they are asked to render service. Many came to CVC with multiple problems -- troubled home environments, drug problems, and children of their own to provide for. Even though CVC made relatively little provision for meeting the CVs' own needs for service -- it was more than six months into the program before CVC added a social support coordinator to its staff -- CVs are able to empathize with those they serve and to derive satisfaction from rendering services to them.

What is not yet known, however, is the breadth or depth of these effects. Will they continue to engage in these kinds of activities? Do they enter occupations where they render service to others? Are they likely -- through either paid employment or voluntary activities -- to devote efforts towards improving the lot of others? More will be known about these questions as more is learned about the post-CVC experiences of the youth.

PROMOTING SOCIAL HARMONY

One of the youth development goals that CVC shares with other youth corps programs is the desire to create an experience for youth from different backgrounds -- different racial and ethnic heritages, different income levels, different walks of life -- to work together interdependently and better understand each other in spite of their differences. The opportunity to promote social harmony among America's youth is a major reason why many youth corps proponents are insistent that these programs should not focus exclusively on disadvantaged youth.

Because CVC was successful in recruiting both males and females and made project assignments without regard to gender, there is every reason to believe that the young people who have served in

CVC will have a more realistic appreciation of the abilities and the limitations of both sexes. Moreover, CVC was successful in recruiting CVs from all parts of the city, and in giving them assignments that took them out of their own boroughs. These young people have therefore had an opportunity to observe and learn about New York City lifestyles that differ from their own.

However, the group of CVs that were recruited in the first year were not as diverse with respect to race and income as was hoped for. As Chapter III discusses, very few whites joined the program and more than three-quarters of all CVs could be considered disadvantaged if public assistance receipt and/or a lack of a high school diploma are part of the definition of the term. As a result, it was not possible to achieve a very important aspect of the social harmony objective -- the integration of young people from different racial, economic and educational groups.

EDUCATION

Confronted with substantial numbers of youth who, having met with failure in the schools, come to their doors with serious educational deficiencies, youth corps programs have not often been successful in implementing strong education programs. They have traditionally eschewed formal education, opting instead for alternative educational approaches.

By contrast, CVC adopted mainstream educational goals from the outset, requiring that all CVs be involved in an appropriate educational experience during their tenure in the program. Because of the range of abilities and credentials that CVs bring to the Corps, CVC offers a range of educational options.

CVC does not directly provide educational services. These are instead provided by a number of vendors, primary among them the City University of New York (CUNY). A contract between CVC and CUNY made it possible for CUNY to leverage $200,000 in Municipal Assistance Corporation funds that were used to set up exclusive Adult Basic Education classes for CVs reading below the eighth grade level and provide college "prep" classes for CVs who are high school graduates. In addition, CUNY provided free placement in GED classes on CUNY campuses for CVs reading at or above the eighth grade level who had not graduated from high school. CVC has also made available free tuition at the New School for CVs who were high school graduates and qualified to enter college courses without a college prep class. The role of CVC is therefore one of coordination -- bringing the participants with their various needs for education together with the services available from vendors. CVC's director of education and more recently, an assistant, are responsible for coordinating the educational component -- from diagnostic testing to academic counseling and placement.

In addition to these educational experiences, CVC encourages the educational development of participants through its scholarship program. CVs who remain in CVC for at least six months are entitled to a cash readjustment allowance and/or scholarship at the end of their service. Each CV selects among a number of options.

After a year of service, CVs are eligible for a cash award of $2,500 or a scholarship worth $5,000 towards the tuition of a two-year or four-year educational program. The cash is payable immediately in a single check. The scholarship is available upon enrollment, within two years of leaving CVC, in an accredited post-secondary educational institution or approved trade school. CVs receive half the scholarship upon proof of enrollment, and the remainder in two installments contingent upon proof of completion of the first year of study and proof of enrollment and attendance in subsequent years.

In addition to the cash-only or scholarship-only options, CVs may also elect various combinations of cash and a scholarship at the end of their service. Reduced cash/scholarship options are also available after nine and six months of service. At nine months, the award is for $1,750 in cash or a $3,500 scholarship; at six months it is $1,000 in cash or a $2,000 scholarship. As after a full year of service, CVs are permitted to select from a number of combinations of these two awards.

There have been a number of difficulties in the implementation of CVC's education component. Staffing for the Education Department is the leanest within CVC, though its task is one of the most complex. Two people -- the education director and an assistant -- have primary responsibility for seeing that the diverse educational needs of all CVC youth are met.

Moreover, the educational component has lacked the consistent support of the team leaders. Team leaders are present at the worksite, and occasionally work side by side with the CVs. Yet, when it comes time to confront the educational task, which is in many cases more difficult than the work, the CV has often done so without the support of the team leader.

Nor did the team leaders have a consistent role in monitoring compliance with class attendance requirements. In the beginning, attendance data from CUNY's MIS system came with a substantial time lag -- thus sanctions could not be enforced as readily as for infractions of work rules. Early in the program, attendance in education classes was running very low -- even though attendance was mandatory and unsatisfactory attendance could result in dismissal from the Corps.

In recognition of these problems, CVC moved in September 1985 to improve its educational component. Major elements in the proposed reform are:

- Placing more of the educational program in the hands of the team leader and making him/her responsible for the management of CV participation in the formal educational program. Team leaders will now be responsible for managing CV placements in CUNY classes; motivating CVs to attend class and take advantage of CVC's educational offerings; identifying and counseling CVs with problems in their classes; and seeing that problems are communicated to and followed up by borough coordinators and CVC education staff.

- An increased focus on experiential learning, which uses the service projects as learning environments to facilitate discovery, understanding and transformation of CVs. In support of this new focus, an experiential learning curriculum is being drafted for team leaders, and CVs are being required to keep a daily journal in which they reflect upon their experiences.

Implementation difficulties notwithstanding, 34 CVs earned their GEDs while in CVC. While not a large percentage of the total number of youth entering the program without a high school diploma, it seems a noteworthy accomplishment given the large number of youth who came into the program with serious academic deficiencies. A small number of youth have been admitted to college, although it is difficult to pinpoint the influence of the CVC experience in their application and acceptance. In at least a few instances, however, it is clear that the CVC experience was an asset. For instance, one CV was awarded Brown University's Star National Service Fellowship based upon his service in CVC. Even those youth who did not earn a GED -- whether because of an early program exit or because of problems inherent in CVC's education component -- received systematic instruction appropriate to their educational needs during their CVC experience. Much more will be known about the effectiveness of CVC's educational component in the second year.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

The program's incentive structure makes it clear that CVC regards education or training as more desirable outcomes for its graduates than immediate employment. Even though preparing youth for jobs is not a specific goal of CVC, many of its youth development goals are nevertheless accomplished through work -- primary among them, the development of a work ethic through empowerment.

Because continued funding depends upon the delivery of acceptable services to New York City, the development of a work ethic adequate to meet these needs is clearly a necessary part of CVC's mission. As such, CVC acted swiftly in response to an unacceptable level of absences and tardiness by docking the CVs' stipend -- reasoning that CVs whose attendance was poor were not incurring expenses that needed to be compensated.

The approach taken in CVC to the inculcation of a work ethic is different from that of youth corps programs like the California Conservation Corps (CCC) or the San Francisco Conservation Corps (SFCC) where it is a more pre-eminent goal. Among other things, CVC differs in the nature of the supervision that enrollees receive and in the likelihood that they will be left unsupervised for significant periods of time.

In programs whose goal is to help youth become more employable, work place supervision is a dominant feature. Emphasis is placed on helping youth learn to follow instructions and accept supervision constructively. CVC philosophy, rather, envisions that empowerment will lead to greater personal growth than if participating youth had to operate under close and constant supervision of team leaders.

The premise that empowerment is a superior means of inculcating the work ethic has not been demonstrated in CVC's first year of operations. Empowerment was not conceptualized or communicated in a way that would allow for its systematic implementation.

SUMMARY

In attempting to move toward its youth development goals -- inculcating a sense of service, promoting social harmony, developing the work ethic, and improving participants' educational attainment -- CVC has made some progress. This section briefly recapitulates some of its accomplishments and shortcomings.

Young men and women from all over New York City worked together in CVC and shared important experiences. However, lack of racial and economic diversity among participants limited CVC's ability to meet its objective of promoting social harmony, and could threaten its ability to maintain its political constituency. CVC gave its participants a structured work experience and exposure to both human services and physical work under conditions that required attendance and punctuality, as well as good task performance. Youth who did not meet these standards had their stipends reduced and, ultimately, faced dismissal. Under these circumstances, CVs received a good introduction to the work ethic. However, this accomplishment was limited by CVC's difficulty in implementing empowerment.

One of CVC's primary youth development goals has been the inculcation of a sense of service. Determining the extent to which this goal was achieved in CVC's first year of operation is a difficult task, however, since a sense of service is probably developed over a long period of time. Ideally, one would want to interview CVs after they have left CVC and begun to make more independent choices about the kinds of lives they will lead.

However, it does appear that, at least in their human services work, CVs are beginning to articulate sentiments that suggest that they are better able to empathize with others and are more willing to do what is within their power to help. This developing sense of service seems more associated with human services work than with physical work, although both kinds of work benefit others. Direct human contact more poignantly conveys the service ethic than physical work projects.

Like the sense of service, meeting the educational needs of its participants is an important youth development goal for CVC. CVC has therefore required that every CV attend appropriate classes while in the Corps. As a result, a small number earned their GEDs during this period, while others received instruction that brought them closer to this goal.

Nevertheless, a number of improvements to the educational component seem warranted if CVC is to meet the educational needs of its participants. Initially, education was isolated from other CVC activities, and team leaders did not focus adequately on seeing that CVs met their educational requirements until quite late in the study period. The education department also seems understaffed for the task; it draws upon too little of total program resources, given the prominence of education among organizational values and the academic deficiencies of the participants.

VI. FUNDING AND COSTS

This chapter examines CVC funding and costs during the planning and start-up period and the Corps' initial fiscal year -- July 1, 1984 through June 30, 1985. This fiscal year covers part of the January 1984 to October 1985 period addressed in the other chapters of this study.

FUNDING

The overwhelming majority of CVC's three-year funding is expected to come from the city's general revenues. The amount is substantial -- $27 million over the three-year demonstration period. CVC enters into annual contracts with the city; funding for each fiscal year is contingent on approval by the New York City Board of Estimate.

The development period started in January 1984, eight months before Board of Estimate approval was received. Funding during this period was handled in two ways: personnel expenses from January through the end of June were funded out of the Mayor's Office. Other expenses, in particular travel expenses to visit other youth corps programs, were granted by a foundation, the Fund for the City of New York. The period from July 1 through Board of Estimate approval in September 1984 was covered by the city and private foundations in the understanding that reimbursement would be made as soon as the budget was approved.

The annual funding process is designed to operate as follows. Once Board of Estimate approval is granted, CVC receives an advance from the City Controller's Office to carry the Corps through July and August, the first two months of the fiscal year. Starting in September of each year, CVC is funded monthly on a reimbursement basis. By the 10th of each month, CVC prepares for the controller a report of the previous month's expenses, four supplemental reports (a summary detail report, cash disbursement report, payroll register for CVs, and Personnel Services report on staff), and a request for cash reimbursement of the previous month's expenses. The requested amount may be equal to actual expenses or an average of those of previous months. End-of-the-year requests are reduced to account for amounts received in the initial two-month advance.

Total funding from the city for fiscal year 1985 was approximately $5.6 million, an amount equal to actual expenses and encumbrances for that period. In addition to New York City revenues, CVC used $16,000 in funding from the New York Community Trust during the first year. While it is not in large amounts, private funding remains important to CVC. It enables the Corps to undertake activities city funds do not cover, such as the

Outward Bound course for team leaders and informational staff visits to other corps.

Support of such magnitude by a single funding source has enabled CVC to be experimental and innovative while mounting a program of ambitious scope on a large scale. The expectation of continued funding over the three-year demonstration period gives CVC a broad mandate and the latitude to experiment. It allows CVC to perform projects defined as needed without seeking reimbursement from sponsors, and it liberates staff from the distractions of fundraising. However, since CVC's very nature reflects the size and security of its start-up funding, it is unlikely that the program could survive in the same form beyond the demonstration period without continued strong support from the city or from an alternative large funder, such as the State of New York.

COSTS

The actual costs for which CVC was reimbursed by the city in its first fiscal year and the projected budget for its second fiscal year are presented in Table VI.1. For fiscal year 1985, all expenses shown represent costs incurred, vouchered and paid for during the fiscal year, with the exception of the encumbrance for FY 1985 described below.

FY 1985 costs cover much of CVC's start-up period, beginning before any recruits went into training and moving to the point when the Corps was nearing full staff capacity. These costs are broken down into major components and analyzed in this section. CVC's projected FY 1986 budget will also be discussed in order to highlight anticipated developments. Fuller examination of the second fiscal year will be deferred until next year's case study, when actual numbers will be available.

FY 1985

Total costs for FY 1985 were $5.6 million. Start-up costs amounted to nearly $1.1 million. These were the one-time costs of making leasehold improvements to central headquarters; purchasing computers, vehicles and office furniture; and acquiring services in MIS development and advertising. CVC's FY 1985 costs, less these one-time start-up expenses, therefore, were $4.5 million. The major components of these $4.5 million in adjusted total expenses are discussed below.

Corpsmember payments were the largest and most significant expense, totalling nearly $1.5 million, or 33 percent of adjusted total costs. This category includes two major subgroups of roughly equivalent cost: stipends and fringe benefits, and scholarship/readjustment allowance payments.

Table VI.1

CVC Cost By Major Category (Cash Basis)*

COST	FY 1985 (Actual)*		FY 1986 (Projected)*	
Corpsmember payments				
Stipends/fringes	$ 772,381		$4,280,533	
Scholarship/ readjustment payments	708,896**		2,102,499***	
	1,481,277	(33%)	6,383,032	(64%)
Operations	1,158,941	(26%)	1,560,235	(16%)
Training	436,854	(10%)	313,025	(3%)
Education	118,646	(3%)	154,540	(2%)
Central office	1,298,224	(28%)	1,589,168	(15%)
TOTAL COST (excluding one-time start-up)	$4,493,942	(100%)	$10,000,000	(100%)
One-time start-up cost	1,122,402		----	
TOTAL COST (including one-time start-up)	$5,616,344		$10,000,000	

Note: All cost figures provided by CVC.

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[*] Includes only costs funded by NYC general revenues. Costs are presented on a cash basis.

[**] Includes $701,396 encumbered by the city for potential cash readjustment/scholarship payments attributable to FY 1985 but not actually paid out during the fiscal year. Of this provision, $108,535 is vested and the balance is unvested. The amount of the unvested portion ultimately paid out will depend upon the length of duty and payout option selected by the CVs in the Corps at 6/30/85.

[***] Based on an enrollment plan that assumes 50% CV attrition, an average of 801 active CVs, and a choice by 60% of eligible CVs of the cash readjustment over the scholarship option.

CVs receive a $30-per-week cash stipend while in training and an $80-per-week cash stipend while in service. This stipend is meant to defray expenses associated with providing service, such as transportation to and from work, lunch and uniforms. CVs are paid by check weekly.

When CVC was designed, exemption from income and Social Security (FICA) taxes was anticipated since other service programs, including VISTA, had been exempted in the past. CVC requested a revenue ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on this issue; when it appeared that a ruling would not be favorable, CVC withdrew its application and resubmitted its request with additional backup information.

Until a favorable ruling is obtained, CV gross pay is $32.35 per week in training and $95.50 per week in service; income and employee FICA taxes are withheld. CVC remits employer FICA taxes to the treasury and holds in reserve all state unemployment insurance payments for CVs until the exemption issue is resolved. These gross figures net out to the $30 training stipend and $80 service stipend originally planned. Thus, CVs receive the same stipend they were told to expect when joining the Corps. In addition, CVC pays and reserves these taxes, as appropriate, on scholarships and readjustment allowances.

The additional cost of paying these taxes forced CVC to reduce its enrollment objective from 1,000 to 800 active corpsmembers. However, this shift did not affect the number of active CVs that CVC was able to field since, as we have seen, they did not reach 800 during the study period.

To contain the tax-related increase in costs, CVC reduced the length of training, froze senior management raises and limited all other raises to five percent, and decreased the annual starting salary for new team leaders. In the event that a favorable ruling is secured, CVC has declared that it will redirect all the released funds to increasing the number of CVs and hiring additional team leaders.

Fringe benefits for CVs include Workers Compensation, health examinations, and health insurance. A complete health exam, required for each person entering training, is conducted either by the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation, the NYC Department of Sanitation or private health facilities. Each CV is covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield for hospitalization. An attempt is made to coordinate coverage with the CV's own or parents' coverage.

After a minimum of six months in CVC, CVs are eligible for either a scholarship or cash readjustment allowance that increases with length of service. After a full year in the Corps, CVs can opt for a $5,000 scholarship or $2,500 in a cash readjustment allowance. Because very few CVs remained in the program for the required six months throughout the first year, only $7,500 was paid during fiscal year 1985.

The actual payout of scholarships and readjustment allowances attributable to 1985 is, however, not yet known, since it depends on how long current CVs serve and the options they select at the end of their service. The maximum amount would be $700,000 if all CVs on board at the end of the fiscal year 1985 remain in service for a full year and opt for the scholarship option. In fact, this sum has been encumbered by the city for potential scholarship readjustment allowance payouts. The minimum amount would be $100,000 if, at the end of the fiscal year, all CVs who have served for more than six months leave and opt for cash while those who have served less than six months leave and receive no payout. The line shown in Table VI.1 for this expense is not an actual figure, but the most conservative projection of this cost. As Chapter III's analysis of attrition suggests, the actual amount will be lower.

Operations costs, at nearly $1.2 million, totaled 26 percent of CVC's total expenses less the start-up costs. The vast majority of these costs, some $740,000, were for operations personnel, primarily team leaders. Most team leaders earn $18,000 a year; however, team leaders starting at the end of the year received a reduced annual salary of $16,000, later changed back to $18,000.

Other components of operations costs are local travel, uniforms and worksite tools. Work sponsors have primary responsibility for providing major tools, materials and supplies, but on some occasions CVC will provide simple tools like hammers, hard hats and overalls. CVC also pays for public transportation when CVs are required to travel to get supplies, attend a borough meeting, or when they are involved in a split site project. Transportation to and from work is the CVs' own responsibility. Each CV gets a basic uniform that costs approximately $200, half of which is paid for by CVC and half by the CVs, generally through payroll deductions. In the winter, CVC provides additional warm clothing at no cost to CVs required to work outside.

Training costs for CVC were almost half a million dollars, 10 percent of adjusted total costs. These expenses were primarily for three purposes: salaries of CVC training staff, not including team leaders who were loaned by the operations department; room, board, transportation and supplies during training; and renovation of the Camp Wel-Met facility.

Education costs totaled less than three percent of CVC's adjusted total expenses. Included in education expenses were salaries for the CVC education staff and a contract with the City University of New York for administration of pre-GED, GED and college preparation courses. This contract is a fee-for-service arrangement. In addition to these administrative expenditures, CVC leveraged outside support directly for corpsmember education from a variety of sources, including CUNY, the New School, and the Municipal Assistance Corporation.

Central office costs were 1.3 million dollars or 28 percent. Roughly half these costs were for personnel expenses in the executive director's office, the project and program development department, and the finance and administration department. The other half went for a variety of administrative expenses such as rent, postage, telephone bills, office supplies, bank charges, audit fees, legal fees and staff training.

Total Costs

At $5.6 million, total costs for FY 1985 including one-time start-up expenses, were substantially less than the $7 million budgeted for the year. The difference is attributable, primarily, to the fact that the number of CVs recruited was fewer and startup was slower than what had originally been planned. Since CVC is reimbursed only for actual costs incurred and also tries to keep the cost-per-slot from escalating, lower costs for the Corpsmember stipend does not mean that funds are freed for other purposes; it simply means lower total expenditures.

FY 1986

The budget for FY 1986 (Table VI.1) represents CVC's first projection of a fiscal year in which CVs are enrolled throughout. The budget's basic assumptions -- expenditures of $10 million and an active corpsmember strength of 801 -- may be overly optimistic for this period. Nevertheless, this budget is useful as a statement of CVC's financial objectives for a program at full strength.

The most significant line in the FY 1986 budget is for corpsmember payments. These payments are projected to equal 64 percent of total costs, with stipends equivalent to nearly $4 million, and scholarship and readjustment allowances attributable to the year predicted at just over $2 million. Calculation of payments to corpsmembers in service during FY 1986 is based on an assumption of 1,380 new trainees, a 50 percent in-service attrition rate, and an average of 801 active CVs. It also assumes that approximately 60 percent of all CVs eligible for a readjustment award (much higher than the percent making this choice in the first year) will select cash rather than the scholarship. While it is difficult to assess the accuracy of these projections overall, the Corpsmember payment line seems high; in FY 1985, it amounted to 33 percent of costs.

An important difference between the FY 1985 and FY 1986 figures appears at the bottom of the column: there are no one-time start-up costs in FY 1986.

COST-PER-SLOT

Before reporting the calculation of CVC cost-per-slot, two important facts should be noted. First, this calculation overestimates cost-per-slot at CVC, which will very likely be much lower when the Corps reaches full strength. The calculation covers a start-up period when the average daily number of CV slots was one-quarter of projected corps strength. At the same time, administrative and operational costs needed to establish basic operations were relatively fixed; these costs are not expected to increase dramatically as the Corps moves to full strength. The resulting number is therefore not comparable with cost-per-slot figures for an established corps operating at full strength. Cost-per-slot for CVC's start-up period are, therefore, presented cautiously for the information they supply about this particular initiative in the context of startup.

Second, a general note is warranted. Cost-per-slot should not be used to judge whether or not a program is expensive or efficient apart from a consideration of its benefits. CVC's emphasis on service and producing valuable work for New York City, for example, suggests that at least some of the program's costs are offset by its service benefits to the community. Cost-per-slot must be viewed in accordance with the full range and quality of a corps' offerings.

The derivation of cost-per-slot for FY 1985 is presented in Table VI.2. A range is given because of the variability of the scholarship/readjustment payment. The basic calculation involves dividing CVC costs (adjusted for startup) by slots (average daily enrollment including CVs in-service and in training during the period.) This calculation is done for minimum and maximum payout scenarios. In both cases, one-time start-up costs and costs for the portion of the fiscal year prior to the arrival of CVs (July 1, 1985 to October 30, 1985) are excluded. The adjusted cost-per-slot at CVC during the period November 1, 1984 to June 30, 1985 lies somewhere between $16,767 and $19,550. Cost-per-participant during this period also lies in a range, $7,919 to $9,233; this measure divides costs by the total number of CVs to come through the program during the November 1, 1984 to June 30, 1985 period. Due to attrition, it is approximately half of CVC cost-per-slot.

As CVC moves out of the start-up period, cost-per-slot can be expected to drop significantly as a result of substantially increased enrollment and relatively stable staffing and operations costs.[1] The projected cost-per-slot for FY 1986 is approximately $12,500, based on $10 million in costs and an average of 801 CVs. This figure for average CVs is taken from projected numbers for the end of each month and does not include CVs in training.

While this projection is quite speculative -- most likely over-estimating costs and CV strength for that period -- it offers a good picture of CVC's cost-per-slot objective at full strength. It is worth pointing out that CVC's original cost-per-slot goal, prior to encountering the stipend tax issue, was $10,000. This calculation was based on $10,000,000 in cost divided by 1,000 volunteers. Actual cost-per-slot calculations for FY 1986 will be presented in P/PV's final report.

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[1] An attempt was made to further support this likelihood by calculating cost-per-slot for the final month of the fiscal year. However, costs during this month were distorted due to end of year activity and, therefore, not useful for clarifying this matter.

Table VI.2

CVC Cost-Per-Slot

FY 1985

Minimum[*]

CASH COSTS (less encumbrance)	$4,914,948	
Less: One-time start-up	1,122,402	
Less: Pre-November 1 costs	329,750	
Plus: Minimum scholarship/ readjustment payments	108,535	
TOTAL	3,571,331	
Divided by: average daily CVs	213	
COST-PER-SLOT		$ 16,767

Maximum

CASH COSTS (less encumbrance)	$4,914,948	
Less: One time start-up	1,122,402	
Less: Pre-November 1 costs	329,750	
Plus: Maximum scholarship/ readjustment payments	701,396	
TOTAL	4,164,192	
Divided by: Average daily CVs	213	
COST-PER-SLOT		$ 19,550

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[*] In making the calculation, the numerators were adjusted to include one of the payout option parameters presented in the text. The minimum payout would be $108,535, the maximum, $701,396. The denominator is the same for both scenarios -- the average daily number of CVs in the corps during the November 1, 1984 to June 30, 1985 period including enrolled in training camp. This period is used because November 1984 was the first month that began with CVs on board.

VII. FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This report has described the history, goals and early implementation phase of the City Volunteer Corps (CVC), the largest urban, non-residential youth corps program operating in the United States. This report covers the period between January 1984 and October 1985, beginning with CVC's planning period and ending a year after its first cohort of participants entered the field in October 1984. Thus, it is the very early stages of program implementation that have been examined in this case study, the first of two reports on the City Volunteer Corps. Only interim conclusions are advanced; more definitive conclusions will appear in the final report.

The first section of this chapter provides an overall assessment of the corps' progress toward achievement of its goals.. It is followed by a series of specific findings from the start-up period that highlight issues that will be examined further in the final report. The final section distills some lessons from the CVC experience that are likely to be of interest to other corps.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

CVC established four goals for the three-year demonstration period:

- To provide important and needed services that directly benefit the city and its people, services that would not otherwise be provided;
- To promote the personal development of the volunteers;
- To achieve a measure of integration among the young people in the corps, who come from different neighborhoods, income levels and walks of life;
- To stimulate, encourage and inform volunteer service activities in other cities and states.

CVC's original goal was to reach a daily capacity of 1,000 in its first year, but an IRS ruling that required an increase in each CV's gross salary forced CVC to reduce target strength to 800. At full strength, however, CVC will be one of the largest youth corps in the U.S. and, by 10 times, the largest urban program. CVC's decision to attain this size grew out of its desire to have a substantial impact on New York City's needs and to draw widespread attention as a model for national youth service.

CVC is notably ambitious in its program model, which is highly complex and seeks to demonstrate a variety of innovative elements simultaneously. The model combines physical and human service work, requires ABE and GED courses for high school dropouts, offers "readjustment allowances" and scholarships at the end of service, places work sponsors in the role of direct project supervisors, emphasizes team "empowerment", maintains a decentralized field structure and runs a residential training program, to name some of the more important elements of the model.

CVC set out rapidly to achieve a program of this scale and scope, and to do it in the logistically complex setting of New York's five boroughs. During the start-up period, it succeeded in getting this program up and running. In addition, CVC has also learned a great deal from testing the many elements of its program -- lessons that should be valuable as it moves into its next stage of development.

Mounting such an innovative program from scratch is enormously difficult; as can be expected, much still remains to be accomplished beyond the achievements of the first year. While the program is operating and making progress, it is not surprising that it has yet to establish the level of productivity, consistency and control expected of a mature program. CVC appears well-positioned at the end of its start-up phase to build on initial progress and develop the potential it has demonstrated.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Work and Service

Service to New York City. CVC provided a considerable amount of needed service to New York City during the period covered, completing nearly 500,000 hours of work. CVs engaged in a wide variety of physical and human service projects and proved themselves capable of handling the demands of this work. In general, the quality of work was sufficiently high to meet the basic purpose of projects and to maintain sponsor confidence.

CVC has yet to reach its enormous productive potential, however. The corps will need to address issues surrounding sufficient work and equipment, adequate worksite management, the complexities of human service delivery and scope of project development before it can increase the quantity and quality of work to its full capacity.

Human Service Work. CVC established itself as the first youth corps to undertake an extensive commitment to human service work, which was clearly valued by sponsors and clients and inspiring to the CVs who provided the service. With substantial creativity, the corps cultivated and performed dozens of different kinds of human service projects, providing a variety of services to the elderly, tutoring school children, assisting at shelters for the homeless and serving many of the other needs of New York City's citizens.

Youth Development

In its first year of operations, CVC experienced both problems and successes in accomplishing its youth development goals.

The Service Ethic. Interviews and observations of CVs, particularly as they went about their human services work, suggest that CVC is having some success in inculcating a sense of service in its participants. CVs appear increasingly able to empathize with the misfortunes of others and are increasingly willing to do what they can to help. This accomplishment is all the more noteworthy in light of the CVs' own needs for service.

Education. CVC has developed an innovative education program that requires CVs to participate in educational pursuits appropriate to their needs and abilities. It has also provided a substantial incentive for further education through its scholarship option. During the study period, 34 CVs received their GED certification, while others received instruction appropriate to their needs. In spite of these accomplishments, however, CVC experienced a number of difficulties in the implementation of the education component, and toward the end of the study period was moving to more fully integrate education with other CVC activities.

The Work Ethic. CVC gave its participants a structured work experience that required regular attendance and punctuality, as well as basic standards for task performance. Because early attendance patterns did not meet CVC's standards, the corps instituted a policy of docking CV stipends for unexcused absences. CVs therefore received an introduction to the work ethic, but one that was limited by CVC's difficulty in consistently implementing its model for supervision and empowerment.

Participants

CVC's goal of fielding a diverse group of 800 youth by the end of the first year was met with regard to geographic diversity -- volunteers come from all the boroughs in roughly the same proportions as the city's population -- and the enrollment of substantial numbers of young women -- 42 percent of participants in the first year were female. On the other hand, fewer youth -- 674 -- were fielded, and the youth recruited in the first year were primarily low-income minority youth who had not graduated from high school. About three-fourths of the CVs were black, 21 percent were Hispanic and two percent were white. Three-fourths had neither a high school diploma nor a GED and over a third came from families that received either food stamps or AFDC.

This profile limited CVC's ability to achieve its social integration goals, and made it difficult to avoid the image of a jobs program or poverty program. The profile also had operational implications. The smaller size of the Corps reduced the amount of work that it could accomplish. In addition, adjustments were required because of the number of CVs who needed basic skills instruction before they could qualify to enter a GED program. Moreover, CVC found it necessary to hire a social support coordinator to attend to the service needs of the CVs themselves. Nevertheless, when CVC was forced by these needs to re-examine its hierarchy of goals -- service to New York City first, followed by service to CVs -- CVC reaffirmed the position that service to the city was the Corps' first priority.

Attrition. Because CVC was still in its first year, and the vast majority of CVs did not have the opportunity to complete a full year in the program by October 31st (the end of the study period), only limited data on attrition and length of stay are available.

For CVC's initial pilot group -- which did have a full year in the program -- length of stay, at about six months, is noticeably longer than that of more mature youth service and conservation programs. This seems in part related to the special status of a pilot group and in part to the influence of the cash or scholarship award that is tied to a minimum of six months of program participation.

Training. The Corps' residential training program has been successful in its major goals of screening out youth who are not ready to enter the program and instilling a basic understanding of the demands of being a CV. After a brief experiment with nonresidential training, CVC resumed residential training, believing that it provided a better orientation to trainees.

Field Operations

Although program design and management decisions are made centrally, CVC's field operations are highly decentralized. This arrangement permits CVC to draw youth from all boroughs of New York City and to perform work throughout the city. On the other hand, it makes it difficult to maintain uniform control over production. Despite the fact that the entire Corps comes together only occasionally, CVC has succeeded in sustaining some corps feeling through uniforms, residential training, borough-wide meetings and signature services. However, the decentralized structure has resulted in a weaker sense of esprit de corps than that observed in some centralized youth service corps.

Teams and Team Leaders. The team is CVC's most important unit -- for administration, work and youth development. Accordingly, team leaders play the crucial role in executing the program, since they function with wide autonomy and discretion. CVC has attracted many outstanding team leaders; overall, their quality has been high. However, team leaders have not had the training and support necessary to make them most effective. The primary consequences are tension between team leaders and the central office, and variability in control and program consistency in the field.

Funding and Costs

CVC has been the beneficiary of a single source of funding, the City of New York, which has budgeted $27 million for the corps over a three-year demonstration period. Because of this support, CVC was able to launch a large, complex and innovative effort quickly. CVC staff was liberated from the distractions of fund-raising and given a broad mandate within which to operate.

Costs. During the first fiscal year, total costs were $5.6 million; $7 million was budgeted for this period. The difference is primarily attributable to lower enrollment than was planned. However, basic administrative and management costs, largely independent of the actual size of the program, were necessary to put the corps in place. As a result, cost-per-slot during the start-up period was higher than can be expected during stable operations. Cost-per-slot should decline significantly once a full complement of corpsmembers is in service.

LESSONS LEARNED

Even though this report has focused on an early period in CVC's development -- in which conclusions are more tentative than definitive -- we nevertheless believe that it contains lessons of general interest and broader applicability to the field. In the sections that follow, these are presented.

The New York City Volunteer Corps, along with the San Francisco Conservation Corps (SFCC), has demonstrated that an urban, non-residential youth corps program is feasible and has great potential for meeting service needs of a city, as well as the developmental needs of its youth.

In diverging from the model represented by most youth service and conservation corps operating in this country, CVC has also demonstrated the feasibility of a large, complex urban youth corps program; the possibility of getting such a program underway rapidly, even if it includes numerous innovative elements; and the practicality and potential of inexperienced youth as human service providers. It seems clear, however, that the size and security of CVC's funding, and its mandate to mount a massive demonstration of a national service model, have contributed to its success in this regard. Programs with lower budgets, diverse funding sources and more localized mandates would be far too vulnerable to accomplish the like in such a short period of time.

The Potential of Human Service Work

Of particular interest to all youth service corps programs is the relatively untried area of delivering human services. The CVC experience, we believe, demonstrates that there is no dearth of needed human service projects in the urban environment; that having corpsmembers deliver such services is not only feasible but shows potential for being highly productive for sponsors and clients; and that delivering human services appears particularly effective for developing the service ethic among the corpsmembers themselves.

While human service projects can be very demanding, CVC has identified a range of projects that are well within the maturity and capacity of relatively inexperienced 17- to 20-year-olds. In particular, intergenerational projects that involve CVs with older adults or with elementary school pupils, and projects with the moderately disabled appear to be the best vehicles for this service. In these projects, CVs can have a clear impact and develop relationships with the clients being served. In short, the promise of this work for youth corps is very strong and its personal effect on many corpsmembers compelling.

At the same time, the CVC experience is instructive about the problems inherent in operating a human service work component:

- Since most human service assignments require less than a full youth corps crew, specific measures must be designed in the case of split crews to protect the identification of corpsmembers with their crew and the Corps as a whole;

- Special steps are also required to avoid downtime due to the episodic demands of clients, and to use these slower times effectively to accomplish other objectives. This downtime can be dispiriting and adversely affect CV engagement in a project.

Non-Residential Program Issues

CVC demonstrated a number of ways in which a decentralized non-residential program can maintain its identity with corpsmembers: residential training, development of a strong family feeling within the team, common uniforms, borough-wide meetings, weekend and after hours activity and, crucially, signature and emergency services that bring the whole corps together. The CVC experience nevertheless suggests that such a program is unlikely to achieve the cohesion or overall group identity of a centralized or much smaller residential program.

Recruitment Issues

The CVC experience has demonstrated that special efforts to target recruitment are necessary to attract a diverse group of participants to an urban, non-residential program. In spite of the intention of CVC's planners to avoid targeting disadvantaged, difficult-to-employ youth, it is precisely this group that was attracted to the program in its first year. Among its recruitment efforts, only presentations at high schools seemed to have the effect of shifting the profile of youth interested in becoming CVs.

Operational Issues

Two principal points concerning operations emerged from CVC's experience:

- The use of work sponsors as worksite supervisors permits a corps to take on a wide variety of projects but reduces control over production. In CVC's experience, human service sponsors tended to provide adequate supervision, but sponsors of physical projects were not so dependable. In the latter cases, CVC staff (team leaders) had to step in without having had ongoing responsibility for the project; or, if the team leaders were absent from the site, work and work behavior went unsupervised.

- Though team leaders with good basic educational credentials and general experience in working with youth can be extremely successful, intensive training by the central staff is necessary in the specific goals of the Corps, the details of the model and management's expectations for the team leader role. Continuing support and contact with the central office is required once the team leaders are in the field.

CVC's experience over the balance of the demonstration, as it builds on progress made in its initial phase and addresses issues that have arisen during this period, should be rich with valuable information for all interested in the operation of youth service programs.

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